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**MERCURY**

UNTOLD FACTS  
IN THE FORRESTAL CASE

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EVERYBODY'S OLD MAN

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DON QUIXOTES  
WITHOUT WINDMILLS

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EDITED BY

*William Bradford Huie*

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# THE NEW AMERICAN MERCURY

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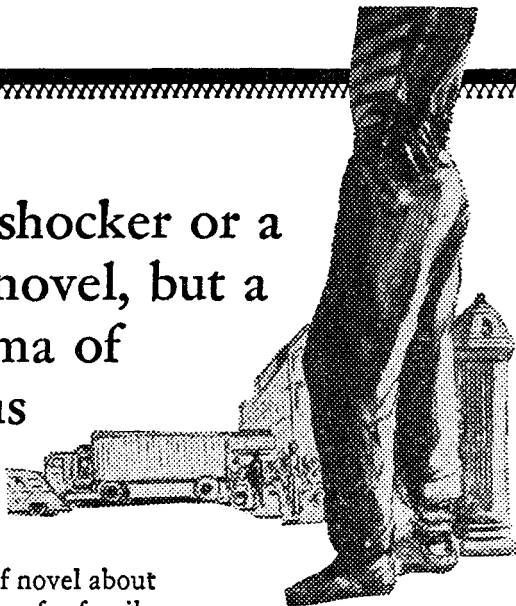
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CLENDENIN J. RYAN  
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tremendous  
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 **PUBLISHERS**



# UNTOLD FACTS IN THE FORRESTAL CASE



IN THE TWENTY months since the destruction of James Vincent Forrestal, there has been a creeping realization in this country that what happened was much more than a poignant personal tragedy — that it was an historic national disaster in which a patriot with vision was allowed to be done to death by lesser men.

The disaster is made apparent by events. Louis Johnson, for whose accommodation Forrestal was destroyed, has been loaded with sins and chased into the briar patch. We have suffered thirty thousand casualties in Korea who might have been spared had Forrestal's policies prevailed. Thoughtful Americans are, therefore, remembering that it was Forrestal who struggled to arm this nation for its commitments, and there is a growing inclination to look again at his

crucifiers and their cloak-holders — at those whom *Time* Magazine identified as “disgruntled politicians, Communists, Zionists, and gossip columnists,” and whom *The Saturday Evening Post* labeled “an ill-assorted group of ideological libertarians.”

Much of the truth has thus far been suppressed, but the ghost of Jim Forrestal is not going to be laid until there are reasonable answers to such questions as these:

Why was the attack on Forrestal so reckless and sadistically savage?

Why have his papers been held secret?

Where is the report of those who investigated his death?

Why was the deposed Defense Secretary held a virtual prisoner at Bethesda Naval Hospital — a prisoner who

could not be visited by his own priest?

The American people can expect some of the truth within the next few months. Unless the Administration can prevent it, there will be a Congressional investigation. There will be publication of such of the Forrestal papers as can be wrested from a Defense Department now headed by General George C. Marshall. Meanwhile, this most recent evidence gathered by *The Mercury* may be helpful.

The Communists, both American and European, had good reason to hate Jim Forrestal: he hated them. He emerged from the Second War dedicated to the destruction of Communism. He had opposed every concession to bring Russia into the war against Japan. He fought General Marshall's effort to force Chiang Kai-shek to coalesce with the Chinese Communists. He battled those men in the State Department who tried to give the Mediterranean to Russia. Forrestal sat up nights figuring ways to fight Communists. And he was not only willing to fight them fairly: he was willing to fight *their* way.

In December, 1947, when France was paralyzed by a general transportation strike, Forrestal summoned his most trusted friends to Washington. He told

them that necessity demanded the use of dollars in Europe for bribes. He explained that he had spent all of the Defense Department's "non-voucherable funds," as well as much of his own money, and that more was needed. His friends produced \$50,000 immediately; the money was carried that night to Paris by an American intelligence officer and paid next day to a prominent Communist leader. The strike ended within twelve hours.

During the Italian elections, in the Spring of 1948, Forrestal acted in the same forthright manner. We have taken much credit for our part in that first postwar victory of the West over the Reds. We prayed, we wrote letters, we sent food, we promised Trieste to the Italians — and our side won. But we might have lost had not Forrestal spent private funds on his own responsibility.

When the Italian campaign was hottest, he again summoned his friends. He warned that the election would be lost unless dollars were used to overmatch Red payments to Italian propagandists. His friends produced, in one lot, upwards of \$100,000 in cash, and this was carried by a New York attorney and paid out in the most effective manner.

Before he permitted large dollar contributions to the De Gasperi campaign fund, Forrestal received



a promise that never, under any circumstances, would De Gasperi allow Communists in his government. This was at a time when other agencies of our government were still advocating a coalition with Communists in China.

When the Defense Secretary was reminded that he might suffer grave consequences if his activities were made public, he replied: "Don't worry about that. These are times that demand personal risk. I am ready to take any consequences of this action."

In addition to finance, Forrestal also employed deception. He had no authority to give American tanks to the Italians, but he was, with authority, shipping tanks to Greece. He, therefore, arranged for freighters loaded with Greece-bound tanks to "refuel" at Naples, and while the ships were "refueling," American troops in civilian clothes "broke in" the tanks by driving them down Italian streets in parades with Italian soldiers, thus giving the impression that the tanks had been delivered to Italy.

After the election a Cardinal then residing in Rome declared: "The Communists blame Mr. Forrestal for this defeat. They have marked him as their No. 1 enemy. He understands them too well."

Such activities by the Defense

Secretary were unknown to the American people, but they were well known to Communist agents in Washington. And these leaders hated and plotted against Forrestal because he hit them where they are weakest: in the venality of their own members. He showed them that two can play their game of justifying means with ends.

A complete report on this phase of Forrestal's tremendous activity will be instructive . . . and it will also explain some of the "sadistic savagery" of the attack on him.

While the Communists were plotting his political, if not his physical, death, Forrestal incurred the hatred of American Zionists. According to the *Nation*, the Zionists "deplored Forrestal's apparent willingness to place the oil of the Near East above the requirements of political justice in Palestine."

Forrestal explained his position in a letter: "If we are to safeguard Western civilization in this crisis, the British and American fleets must have free access to Near Eastern oil. That is a fact, however unpleasant it may be. When there is a crisis aboard a submarine, we close bulkhead doors and drown a third of the crew in order to save the other two-thirds. I am interested in political justice in Palestine, but this in-

terest must remain secondary to my primary interest, which is the protection of America and the West from the gravest threat we have ever faced. No minority has the right to jeopardize this nation for its own selfish interest."

The Defense Secretary invited more Leftist animosity when he opposed the "Morgenthau Plan" for the destruction of German industry. The plan is now almost universally acknowledged to have been ridiculous.

These twin positions caused a number of writers and commentators, including Drew Pearson and Walter Winchell, to join in what *The Saturday Evening Post* described as "reckless and sadistically savage" attacks on Forrestal.

Despite the Zionist hatred of Forrestal, when the private money was being raised for the Italian and French crises, Forrestal's Jewish friends contributed eagerly and generously.

In the fall of 1948, the rest of the United States was engaged in a political campaign, but Forrestal was engaged in a campaign against the Kremlin. It was the year of the Italian elections, the French strikes, the continuing unification battle, the Berlin blockade. Forrestal, with his incredible energy, worked night and day, including Sundays. In ten years in Washington he had

three days vacation. He knew from intelligence reports that the Russians had ventured the Berlin blockade because the United States was in the turmoil of an election. He wanted desperately to keep the Defense Department out of the political campaign.

Forrestal was a Democrat. His father, an Irish Catholic contractor at Beacon, N. Y., had been a "Cleveland man." Jim Forrestal, at Princeton, and during the years when he had made himself a millionaire in Wall Street, had remained a Democrat and a party contributor. At Roosevelt's invitation he had resigned his \$180,000-a-year job in 1940 and plunged into public service with all his characteristic energy. He was admired by such diverse individuals as Harold Ickes and John D. Rockefeller Jr.

Forrestal's relations with Truman were friendly but not warm. Forrestal was no poker player, no political opportunist, no professional Legionnaire, no practitioner of the expedient: he was busy and serious. It is possible that he, with his first-rate brain and immense, world-wide experience, was somewhat contemptuous of Truman, but he never revealed it. Instead, even when the President flatly refused to support the \$17-billion budget for the services, Forrestal did not resign but remained loyal.



However, as Defense Secretary in so dangerous a period, Forrestal was convinced that he should not take an active role in trying to re-elect Truman. This enraged the political gang around the White House. They reasoned in this manner: they needed money; Forrestal was the big shot in the Cabinet; he was a millionaire Wall Streeter; he had rich friends; he ought to raise money for Truman.

Thus began the slanders and libels that Forrestal was disloyal to Truman; that he had contributed nothing to the campaign; that he had made a deal with Dewey. All of these were lies. He was completely loyal. He contributed \$6,000 of his own money to the campaign; he asked a number of his friends to contribute. Truman knew of his contribution; so did Louis Johnson. Two reputable Republicans can testify that he refused to discuss even the possibility of his remaining in a Dewey Cabinet. But dedicated as he was to the war against Communism, he did refuse to black-jack Defense Department suppliers for campaign funds.

One White House pseudo-military figure remarked: "Yeah, that rich s. o. b. has raised a million bucks to buy votes in Europe, but he's giving us chicken feed to buy votes for Truman."

It would, perhaps, have been

better for the country if Forrestal had called in his wealthy friends and explained that he had to raise a million dollars in order to safeguard his job. But he didn't; Louis Johnson did; so Johnson became the candidate of the Missouri Gang for Defense Secretary.

The day after Truman's inauguration in 1949, the campaign to "get Forrestal" was thrown into high gear. The country has seldom seen its like. The Communists, the "ideological libertarians," the Missouri Gang and the columnists manned the mud buckets.

Forrestal was accused of having defrauded the Government in a tax case. He was, of course, a Fascist, a warmonger, a racist, a bedfellow of I. G. Farben and the German cartelists, he bathed in oil — Near Eastern variety — and he smirked over the murder of Jewish babies by Arabs. He was a renegade Catholic; and, as a climax, Pearson reported that he was a personal coward, that he had once abandoned his wife to burglars and run out of the back of the house.

At the height of the campaign a New York publicity agent was heard reassuring a client: "Don't worry: that sonofabitch'll crack up in thirty days. He can't take what we're dishing out to him."

Why was it necessary for them to discredit Forrestal? He had

tendered the customary resignation to Truman. Why didn't Truman just accept his resignation?

There are two explanations. In the first place, Truman had frightened Johnson by vacillating. When Forrestal had visited Truman after the inauguration, expecting to be fired, Truman had surprised him by saying: "Jim, I want you to stay with me. I know what you're doing, and I want you to stay on and complete the job. You have my complete support."

Truman kept stalling Johnson during January and February, and there was one bitter night for Johnson in New York when he was convinced that Truman, like Roosevelt, had betrayed him and that he wouldn't get the job.

So, in the first place, Forrestal had to be discredited in order to safeguard the job for Johnson; and, in the second place, he had to be discredited in order to make it "politically safe" for Truman to fire him. In present-day politics you can't fire a man without first maligning him.

Under different circumstances Forrestal probably would not have been upset by vituperation. But he was now a dedicated man; he was emotionally involved in his crusade to make this country strong. He regarded Truman and Johnson as political opportunists, neither of whom would hesitate

to trim sail in an adverse wind. He didn't believe that either Truman or Johnson understood the realities of the world conflict. He had dedicated himself to trying to *increase* this country's armed force; he had defied the pressure groups; and he felt, quite correctly, that Truman and Johnson would yield to the pressure groups and actually *decrease* the country's armed force.

This, of course, is exactly what Truman and Johnson did — once Forrestal was destroyed — and this is the essence of the Forrestal tragedy.

The conflict raged through January, February and March, for by the middle of January, Forrestal's friends had begun fighting back. They spent \$35,000 trying to counteract the Winchell-Pearson campaign.

Forrestal's friends also tried to divide the pressure groups. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had been brought in against Forrestal, with Walter White charging that the Defense Secretary had "delayed the end of segregation in the armed forces." To counteract this, the Urban League, another organization aiding the cause of Negroes, came vigorously to Forrestal's defense. The Urban League had assisted Forrestal in combatting Communism among Negroes on our ships.

Responsible publishers tried to come to Forrestal's aid. Eugene Meyer dropped Pearson's anti-Forrestal columns from the *Washington Post*.

Because Forrestal had been reared in a Catholic home, then had drifted away from the church and married a divorcee, he was attacked as a "renegade Catholic." The office of Cardinal Spellman, which perhaps had not been entirely unaware of Forrestal's effective efforts in Europe, rallied to his defense. To show that the church backed Forrestal, it was first planned to award him an honorary degree at Fordham, but this couldn't be done until May, and Forrestal needed help in March. So it was hastily arranged for him to address the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in New York on St. Patrick's Day.

At the St. Patrick's Day dinner, Cardinal Spellman, lauding Forrestal, went to the unusual extent of endorsing universal military training. If the Defense Secretary, the Cardinal said in effect, believes that this measure is necessary in this grave hour, then he has my support.

Forrestal's address was a sad affair, for after ten weeks of such buffeting he was a fading man. Truman had demanded his resignation within forty-eight hours. He wanted the resignation to be as of April first, but he wanted it

in hand within forty-eight hours. Forrestal's first decision was to state his case in a long letter and release it to the press, and he asked his advisers in New York to prepare such a letter. Then he changed his mind and dictated his own brief resignation.

During March Forrestal appeared dazed and depressed. His friends thought he might have been drugged. He talked sadly about how America was going the way of France; he predicted that American troops would be fighting within a year.

He showed interest when friends discussed with him the proposed purchase of the *New York Sun*. It was their plan to make him editor of the *Sun* so that he could continue his fight to arm America against the Soviet threat. When he went to Florida it was with the understanding that he would become editor of the *Sun* after his recuperation.

On April first Forrestal attended the mammoth swearing-in ceremonies for Johnson. He wept openly. The President insisted on decorating him — and Forrestal wept while the President was pinning on the medal, for he considered the gesture an insult. He walked back with Admiral Denfeld, weeping, and he told the Admiral that he was going down to Florida to play some golf.

On April fifth, there was a tele-

phone call from Ferdinand Eberstadt in Washington to Robert A. Lovett in Hobe Sound, Florida. Mr. Eberstadt reported that Forrestal was ill.

"Is he very ill?" Mr. Lovett inquired.

"He is very, very ill," Mr. Eberstadt replied.

Four hours later, just at dusk, the big Air Force Constellation, the *Dew Drop*, circled and landed at a small, deserted field near Hobe Sound. Waiting was a single automobile in which were Mr. and Mrs. Lovett and Mrs. Forrestal. The door of the airplane was opened, the small ladder dropped.

"I looked up there and saw him standing in the door," Mr. Lovett recalls, "and he looked so pitiful. He was alone. And he didn't look like the man I had known at all. He looked like a little, *old* Irishman. His eyes were sunk, and I couldn't see his upper lip. As he came stumbling down that ladder I reached up and caught him under the arms."

After he had greeted the two women, Forrestal stood under the tail of the airplane and told Mr. Lovett that "they" had gotten him, that he was being followed, that his telephones were tapped, and he broke into tears as he said: "They're going to catch us unprepared, Bob; America is going the way of France."

During the evening he was quiet, but next day he was worse. Mr. Lovett telephoned Washington and Forrestal's personal attorney, John Cahill, of New York, arrived with Dr. William Menninger and Dr. George Raines. The illness was diagnosed as "occupational fatigue," and Forrestal was returned to Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Just what happened during the seven weeks Forrestal was at Bethesda may never be known, but here are a few of the strange, human, and tragic developments.

Forrestal, in his 16th floor suite, spent most of his time entirely alone. Mrs. Forrestal sailed for Europe on April 12th.

Two of the persons who visited the hospital and who were most interested in Forrestal were his older brother, Henry Forrestal, of Beacon, N. Y., and Monseignor Maurice S. Sheehy, of Catholic University, Washington. Henry Forrestal lives at the Forrestal home place and is a highly respected citizen. Father Sheehy, a Navy chaplain, was one of Jim Forrestal's closest friends.

Early in 1949, Forrestal had asked Father Sheehy, along with Henry Forrestal, to help him return to the Catholic Church. To facilitate this return, some investigation had to be made into Mrs. Forrestal's previous divorce, and this investigation was con-

ducted by Henry Forrestal.

Forrestal was admitted to the hospital by Captain B. W. Hogan, and Captain Hogan noted that Forrestal insisted on being listed as a Catholic. His first request was to see Father Sheehy. This request was noted by Captain Hogan, but for reasons not yet explained, Captain Raines, the psychiatrist in charge, refused this request.

On April 12th, Henry Forrestal visited the hospital and talked with his brother as well as with Captains Hogan and Raines.

"Jim looked much better than I expected," Henry Forrestal recalls. "His eyes seemed clear; he was sharp and incisive. He told me: 'I'll be all right. We'll pull out of this.'"

What worried Henry Forrestal was the confinement in Bethesda. He told Captains Hogan and Raines: "What my brother needs is not to be cooped up up there on the 16th floor. He needs to be on an estate somewhere, among friends, where he can walk around in the sun. He has been an exceedingly active man."

Mr. Forrestal asked Captain Raines: "Is my brother fundamentally okay?" Captain Raines answered: "Yes."

Henry Forrestal also told the doctors that his brother wished to talk with Father Sheehy. Captain Hogan replied, according to

Mr. Forrestal: "Yes, he has asked to see the Father several times. And, of course, he will."

On May 10th, 11th and 12th, Henry Forrestal again visited the hospital. Meanwhile, Father Sheehy had visited the hospital six times, each time asking to be allowed to see Forrestal and each time being denied permission by Captain Raines.

Henry Forrestal confronted Captain Raines and requested an explanation. Captain Raines, according to Mr. Forrestal, admitted that Forrestal had asked to see the priest. But Captain Raines wanted the priest to wait.

"How long do you want to wait, doctor?" Mr. Forrestal asked. "We have waited five weeks. Delays in such cases can be dangerous. Have you ever heard of a case where being visited by a clergyman has hurt a man?"

Father Sheehy, who is built along the lines of a Notre Dame fullback, is no man to be put off easily. After arguments with Captain Raines, Father Sheehy got the impression that Raines was under some sort of orders in the case, so he went to John L. Sullivan, Secretary of the Navy. Sullivan called Dr. Raines and was assured that Father Sheehy could see the patient "in time."

Henry Forrestal was also determined to obtain his brother's

release from Bethesda. He felt that if he could get Forrestal out in the sun, on some estate, and allow Father Sheehy to talk with him, that he would recover quickly.

Father Sheehy, in opposing Dr. Raines, recalled statements by Dr. Jung to the effect that "out of hundreds of patients there was not one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life." And again: "No patient has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

For Sunday, May twenty-second, Henry Forrestal had a travel reservation to Washington. He was going to make another effort to obtain his brother's release from Bethesda.

But it was too late. At 1:45 a. m. on Sunday, May twenty-second, Jim Forrestal escaped from his sixteenth floor prison to his death.

When he was buried in Arlington, Truman declared: "This great American was as truly a casualty of the war as if he had died on the firing line."

Father Sheehy declares: "Had I been allowed to see my friend,

Jim Forrestal, receive him back in the Church, and put his mind at ease with the oldest and most reliable medicine known to mankind, he would be alive today. His blood is on the heads of those who kept me from seeing him."

Dr. Raines has nothing to say, though a formal demand has been made on the Navy by members of Congress for an explanation as to why Forrestal was denied the comfort of his friend and spiritual adviser.

Meanwhile, the people of the United States have paid in blood for the political opportunism which destroyed Forrestal. In a few years perhaps a monument may be erected to him, and a suitable inscription might be:

"Here lies a patriot who also possessed vision. In a period of crisis for his nation, when mediocrity was enthroned in Washington, he stood forth as a first-rate mind, a dedicated spirit, an inspiring Renaissance man who understood the realities of the world in which he lived, and who, scorning opportunism, gave his energy, his mind, and his life." — WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE.





# DON QUIXOTES WITHOUT WINDMILLS



by Robert Lowry

THEY STAND three-deep in the midtown Manhattan bars these days, and in the tonier bars in every big city in America — looking studiously unhappy but recently shaved and quite clean. They are all, every suffering, sad-faced one of them, underground men.

They own up to this themselves, with no urging. And they are not even poor but earnest students in the romantic nineteenth century tradition of poor but earnest students; not even bohemians using their souls for punching bags in two-by-four curtainless, carpetless closets and living on what a well-bred rat would disdain; not even threadbare government clerks the way Dostoyevsky's original model was a government clerk, snarling at his inkwell and coughing in his vodka.

Underground Man Model 1950 wears a tie, buys shoeshines, gets

his hair trimmed every ten days, washes his armpits, drinks good liquor, rolls around town in taxicabs, keeps appointments, tends to his business, and makes big dough — enough to be married on (imagine that!), and his wife is pregnant. There is even a chance that the marriage will last. He is serious. And nervous. So nervous that every ten minutes he reaches up and plucks another one of life's goodies and gulps it down. Everything he touches has been cleaned recently by high-priced hired help; everything he looks at has its price, and more often than not he can pay it.

He is twenty-eight or thirty or thirty-two years old — World War II's answer to the Lost Generation. But he is not lost (1925), he is not a Commie (1935), he is not even bitter (1942). He is in the chips (1950) and if this job runs out on him, why, he'll just

go and get another: they are findable. Same for the little woman (although as noted above she is pretty well tied up now). Hereally has nothing to worry about. But listen to him worry. And listen to what he calls himself.

This underground man cannot quite lay a finger on the reasons for his discontent. He is sure that his opinions are contra the world's, but all the boundaries of opinion seem so shifty of late that he has a hard time making up his mind just where he stands. In the twenties the country itself was so wrong with politics, evolution, Sacco, Vanzetti, munitions makers and blue-sky stock that the place to make a stand was obvious: right in the middle of a bathtub full of gin. Ditto for the thirties: the underground man was hungry and he could hate the eaters (and join something and sign something and march against something while carrying something). But dressed up natty, with money in the kick and a baby on the way, where will he make his stand? And what is he going to stand against?

The A bomb? He sold out on that question in 1945 when he felt so good after they told him he wouldn't have to storm Emperor Hirohito's beaches after all. The Horrors and Crudities of Mass Cultural Mediums (radio, TV, movies, bestsellers)? Hell,

when he went back to his hometown last summer, even his mother wanted to know more about George Orwell, William Faulkner and Ezra Pound — seems she'd been reading about them in the Luce publications. The Futility of War? The generation that follows him is wearing the helmet now, and with his baby due soon (and his getting older), he probably will never have to lift a B bag again, given a little luck. Capitalists? Why, the Rockefellers hand out checks to underground men just like himself, so that they can carry on in comfort. All right, then, the Anti-Commie Concentration Camp Law? But it's not underground to be against that. Even Harry T. hates it.

The Hiss affair left him cold: it wasn't his generation on trial. The serialized and anthologized wailings and confessions of the 1935 underground men (they come in various shades of crimson, and are very apologetic), don't move a hair on his head. The machine age seems here to stay (goodbye, Sherwood Anderson) and is paying off in cash even for people who work. For a while after the war, old moss-backed Europe with its wise ways and its willing whores looked like a sturdy stick to shake at the homefolks, but when the 1950 underground man hustled over there a year ago to have another look, he felt home-

sick. What else, when he spent most of his time answering Frenchmen's questions about Mississippi, and hunting out the black market to buy Chesterfields? Sure, the Colosseum looked as good as ever, but how much finer a structure was it really than the Third Avenue El? Besides, the girls were no longer the adventurous, war-struck daughters of a thousand bourgeois families who six or seven years ago came bouncing out to meet the GI conquerors every time a new city fell. They were seedier and fewer now, and they produced their health cards as a way of starting a conversation. . . .

The underground man sneaked guilty glances at the starved, dirty hand of Europe that seemed to open before him every time he settled down to a *gelata con panna* in Rome or a pernod in Paris, so he took the boat back home. That reappearing hand made him remember where he could lay one on some ready cash, and here he is now, all dressed up with whole soles on his shoes and a tie around his neck, riding his times and lacking only something to be subversive about.

A damn shame, isn't it? I met one of these guys the other day: his suit bore a Madison Avenue label and his breath cut with a Four Roses edge. He filled the bill so well that his wife was even

going to have baby (or maybe she had already delivered; he hardly wanted to talk about it). Anyhow, he was picking up five hundred a month, keeping his hands clean, disdaining both the Greenwich Village neurotics and the uptown successes but shuttling between the two at least three or four times a week, trying to decide to which group he belonged and never able to make up his mind because he really belonged to both, and (he was sure) neither.

I asked him his opinion on something and he said he hesitated to give it because his opinion tended to conflict with almost everybody else's. "I am something," he said, "of an underground man." He was 30. So I coaxed that underground opinion out of him, and it was my opinion too. It was the opinion of everybody I knew. And I saw myself sitting there in his place; *was* myself: after all, I had shoes on my feet, meat in the Frigidaire, a baby in the playpen and a pretty wife on the porch. I'd even gone him one better: I already had the house in the country. And I too felt like an underground man, and was disturbed chiefly because I could no longer quite put my finger on my principal secret antagonisms, real though their shadows seemed to be.

A couple of summers ago, in

Paris, I ran into an ex-GI who was hiding out from the truth: his war novel, which he had written for the people who used to read *Story* and *The New Anvil*, had turned out to be a big fat best-seller, a book-club selection and all the rage among the overstuffed reviewers he had always thought he hated. While the royalties and acclaim were pouring in, he huddled in shame in a dark Paris flat, harboring Spanish Republicans and ideas that there had been some terrible mistake. "I think it was just my publisher," he told me lamely. "He took it in his head to make it a bestseller and he spent enough money on advertising to put it over." His only mistake was his assumption that his opinions could not possibly be popular opinions; that his book (comfortably liberal and no more explosive than the thoughts of ten thousand other ex-GIs) could not possibly appeal to anyone except an underground, diehard, radical few. The last I heard of him he had reached Hollywood, where he was still working hard at preserving his illusions.

## II

How can you be an underground man and hold a majority opinion? How can more than a handful in any given city (even New York) call themselves "underground men?" I've got an answer,

underground men: Maybe the failure of every public underground man in the past decade to keep on burrowing has filled great masses of the well-fed American World War II generation with an urge to propagate a great tradition and proclaim themselves subversive (not necessarily politically: morally, emotionally, sexually) even though their very lives proclaim the opposite. All the underground idols have crumbled now; they have all done an about-face; they are against nothing.

Henry Wallace, who was probably wrong, now declares himself wrong — publicly. Hemingway, who hated war (the way I read it), can't say enough nice things about killers, so long as they are professional killers. That mangy, roaring lion of the Paris urinals, Henry the Horrendous Miller, now believes in God and may even believe in air-conditioning before it's all over. Irwin Shaw hurriedly withdraws *Bury the Dead*, trembling in fear that the wrong people will praise it. John Dos Passos spends his time trying to disillusion readers who believed what he had to say in *USA*.

They all belong in the same zoo now, but even while giving them the old heave-ho into the cages, Model 1950 gets a queasy feeling. Now that Left is Right and Right is Left; now that T. S. Eliot is a *Time* cover boy and many exotic

obscurities no longer come out on lavender paper in editions of sixty-nine copies, but sell like hotcakes to the Kansas housewife trade who want to be in the know; now that Jackson Pollock's technicolor spermatozoa get double-page spreads in the million-copy picture magazines and *Nightwood* is a New Directions bestseller and the fashion books feature Isherwood, and the queues of the Socialist experiment look almost (if not quite) as grim as the concentration camps of the Communist experiment; now that Robert Taft votes to cut military expenditures while the drop-the-bomb-on-the-Russians Republican press supports him — I ask you, friend, is it any wonder that Underground Man Model 1950 finds himself embarrassed for a solidly obscure underground opinion, a really radical, rascally attitude that will knock the Sears, Roebuck socks off the fuddy-duddy old man back in Oswego?

Now for the hopeful note. Maybe, I keep telling myself, it's all for the best. Maybe, amidst all the clamor and the confusion, the neurasthenia, the piles of butchered South Koreans and massacred North Koreans and faceless, footless, shell-blinded GIs, the reactionary liberals and the liberal reactionaries, the Commies who stand for peace and the Catholic Church which stands for

peace and General Douglas MacArthur who stands for peace, the young underground men who have found nothing to stand for and the old underground men who have forgotten what they stood for — maybe a new kind of thinking, walking, talking individualist is shaping up, one who can look at his times and think about his times the way an Elizabethan individualist could look at and think about his. Not with all this shifty-eyed guilt at being caught holding a popular opinion, or no opinion; not with an arbitrary dedication to the defiant or the obscure or the what-used-to-be-called radical; not with a grim determination to divide everything up into minorities and majorities, where every human being I have ever met looks out of place and refuses to stay; but with a willingness to face the facts and accept the truths even when they turn out to be pretty ordinary looking facts and pretty old truths.

Maybe it is really all right to ride your times and eat well and even raise a family so long as you do not kid yourself into thinking you are still a last-stand minority and a particularly dangerous and unusual man. Maybe the only frustration these days is the necessity to believe in a myth that only the twenties and thirties could support: the myth that if a man

is not particularly dangerous or particularly unusual he is not worth the dust on the top of a copy of *Das Kapital* or the heels off a pair of Gertrude Stein's old brogans.

Maybe when that myth finally fades, the 1950 thinking man who had always found it necessary to believe he was living underground will be for the first time able to look at people as people, events as events, the world as the world, and (especially) himself as himself. (Do I make myself clear? I don't believe

I said bring on the bomb and the Russians.)

In the meantime one of these comfortable, slicked-up 1950 editions (he writes for the movies but pretends he is living in a cellar) has come up with a temporary solution to his dilemma. It's only a sentence, but it's such an old thought that it sounds brand new and very explosive. His answer to any contemporary problem adds up to one satisfying, resounding blast: "It all comes down to this, brother: *man is incapable of solving his problems.*"

*Robert Lowry fought with the American Army in Italy in World War II. He is thirty one years old, and the author of four books of fiction. For a while he tried living in New York City, but he finally gave it up and is now settled in Connecticut. There will be more of Mr. Lowry's work in subsequent issues of this magazine.*



\*  
*An*  
\*  
*Early*  
\*  
*Snow*  
\*

A STORY BY  
Chandler Brossard

TELL ME when you're tired,  
son."

"I will."

"We'll stop when you want  
to."

"I don't want to stop yet,  
Pop," George said. "Let's keep  
going for a while."

"All right," his father said.  
"But don't be afraid to say you're  
tired."

"I'll tell you."

"I don't know what I would do  
if I couldn't take walks," his  
father said. "They're the best  
thing in the world for your old  
man, George. They take his mind  
off his troubles."

They came to an intersection  
now and waited for the light to

change. George watched a black  
Packard cross the intersection  
and drive by them. He listened to  
the shifting gears and the sound  
the motor made as the car gained  
speed. He could tell the make of  
most cars just by the sound of  
their motors and gear shifts. The  
light changed. George's father  
took his arm crossing the street.  
He let go of it when they reached  
the other side. "Always wait for  
the lights, George. It's dangerous  
to walk against them."

"I know, Pop. I know."

"Don't get angry. I tell you  
these things because I don't  
want you to get hurt."

When they had walked half a  
block George's father said, "It's  
getting colder. We'll walk to the  
church park and sit for a minute  
and then go back to Mrs. John-  
son's. All right?"

"O.K.," George said. His  
father winked at him and he  
winked back. He had to walk  
fast to keep up with his father.  
He tried to keep in step with him,  
looking down at his father's legs  
and taking bigger steps, but he  
could not do it. Looking up now  
he saw the small park ahead, be-  
hind the church.

"Have you seen your mother  
lately, George?" his father asked  
as they came into the park.

"I saw her three days ago."  
They sat down on an empty  
bench.

"How was she? How is everybody?"

"They're all fine," George said.

"Did she say any more about your being with me?"

"She wanted to know if you were drinking."

"Did you tell her I haven't had a drink of whiskey in two months?"

"Yes. I told her."

His father held out his right hand, palm down, spreading the fingers wide. George and his father watched the hand. It shook just a little. "Look at that, George," he said, smiling. "How's that for the old man?"

"That's swell, Pop. I know you're all right now."

His father let his hand drop. "What else did your mother have to say, George?"

George looked down at the brown scrub grass before answering. Then, not looking at his father but looking at the scrub grass, he said, "She wanted to know if you had got another job yet."

His father took a pouch of tobacco and some cigarette papers from his overcoat pocket. George watched him. His father's hand shook a little as he rolled the cigarette. Some tobacco grains spilled onto his overcoat. He lit the cigarette and took a big inhale, and brushed the spilled to-

bacco grains from his overcoat.

"We'll get along, George," he said. "I'll be getting another job in just a few days. Your old man's not through yet by a long shot."

George leaned his head against the top of the bench and watched the smoke curl thinly away from his father's cigarette. It smelled like pipe smoke. George looked around the small park. He and his father were the only people there now.

In a few minutes his father took a long drag on the cigarette and dropped it on the ground in front of the bench. "We'd better be getting back to Mrs. Johnson's," he said.

George stood over the still burning cigarette butt, watching it burn and breathing in the strong pipe tobacco smell of it, then he ground it out with the heel of his shoe. They walked out of the park.

Several other boarders were sitting in the living room reading and talking when George and his father came in. Some of them looked up as they walked through. George's father nodded and said hello to a couple. A plump woman with red hair smiled at George and said, "Hello there." George said hello without smiling and walked out of the living room with his father and back to the stairway going upstairs.

Upstairs in their room his father hung up his overcoat and George's in the closet, and sat down in the big chair with his back to the windows. He took the newspaper from the small table there and turned to the crossword puzzle. "Don't forget to wash your hands before you go down to dinner, George," he said, putting on his glasses.

"Aren't you coming down?" George asked, looking at his father.

"No," he said, working at the puzzle. "I'm not very hungry, George. Maybe later on I'll go down in the kitchen and fix myself a bite."

George sat on the edge of the double bed. "Why don't you want to come down now, Pop?" he asked. "You wouldn't have to eat much if you didn't want to."

"No," his father said, working the puzzle. "I'll go down later and fix myself a sandwich and a cup of java."

"You don't have to eat a lot just because you're sitting at the table," George said. He watched his father, waiting for him to say something, then he got off the bed and walked slowly to the wash basin behind the screen in the corner of the room and washed his hands. After drying his hands he stood at the door and said, "I'll come back up right after dinner, Pop."

"All right, son," his father said, looking up now from the puzzle and winking at him. George winked back and went downstairs to the living room.

At the entrance to the living room George stopped and looked around for a place to sit down. There was an empty place at the end of a three-cushion sofa where a man and a woman were sitting reading the newspaper. George walked across the room to the sofa and sat down. The man sitting on the sofa smiled slightly at George. George smiled a little and then looked away and out of the window. It had begun to snow. George watched the falling snowflakes.

"Come along, everybody. Dinner's ready."

George turned around. Mrs. Johnson was standing in the entrance of the living room. She was tall and fat. She had on an apron over her dress. The boarders got up now and went into the dining room with Mrs. Johnson. George was among the last to walk in and sit down at the long table.

Mrs. Johnson sat at the head of the table, two seats from George. She looked at the empty place next to George, between them. "Where's your father?" she asked.

"He's not hungry," George said. "He said maybe he'd come

down later on for something to eat."

"Is he sick or something?"

"No. He just isn't very hungry right now." George turned his head now and looked at the dishes of food on the table.

Mrs. Johnson kept looking at George, then she began piling food on her plate from a steaming dish in front of her. The boarders were serving themselves and passing dishes around the table. George served himself some sweet potatoes from a dish passed to him and leaned across his father's empty place to hand the dish to Mrs. Johnson. He helped himself from the other dishes passed to him. When he was not using his left hand to cut food, he kept it off the table, in his lap. Now, eating, he listened to the other boarders talking. Some of them took second helpings of food.

The colored girl brought in two big dishes of ice cream. Some of the boarders just drank coffee and did not take any of the ice cream. George had one helping, eating it carefully and looking around the table, and when he finished he saw that the big ice cream dish near him was still a quarter full. He reached and put a spoonful of ice cream on his plate.

"You sure eat a lot for a boy who is on credit," Mrs. Johnson said.

George quickly looked up from

his plate at her and as he did he saw the man across from him looking at them both and then look down at his plate and go on eating his ice cream. George looked steadily into Mrs. Johnson's face, and then he looked away and down at the ice cream on his plate, keeping his eyes there.

Mrs. Johnson leaned toward him and in a firm voice said, "Tell your Daddy I want to talk to him tonight before he goes to bed. You understand?"

George nodded at her, and dropped his head again and watched the ice cream melting on his plate.

Mrs. Johnson pushed away from the table. "Staying up in that room, avoiding me," she said to no one in particular, and went into the kitchen.

Now George raised his head. He saw two boarders across the table looking at him. He sat there and looked back down at the melting ice cream. In a few seconds he looked toward the kitchen and then he left the table and went up the stairway. Halfway up the stairway he began taking two steps at a time, quickly.

His father was still sitting with his back to the window, working at the puzzle and smoking. He looked up when George came in. George sat down on a corner of the bed and stared at his hands

held together between his knees. Going on with the puzzle, his father said, "Did you have a good dinner, George?"

George did not answer right away. He sat stiffly on the corner of the bed and looked now at the wall. "It was O.K.," he said after a few moments.

"Just O.K.?" his father asked, working at the puzzle.

"Uh huh." Now George watched his father. He got off the bed and walked to his father's chair. "Let's go out, Pop. Let's go around the corner and you can have a beer and I'll have a coke and we can listen to the radio. Come on."

"Listen to that," his father

said, taking off his glasses and smiling. "Leading the old man back to the taverns."

"Come on, Pop. Let's go."

"All right then. I could use a glass of beer." He stood up, stretching. "But we won't stay too long. I want you to be in bed early, George. You need your sleep."

"Sure, Pop."

His father turned around now and looked out of the window. "Look at that, George," he said. "It's snowing. We're having an early snow."

"I know it," said George. "I saw it." And he went to the closet and took out his overcoat and his father's.

## *A Statement by the Publisher . . .*

*This time of crisis, for our America and the world, is a time for clear-headed, courageous, uncompromisingly honest publishing. This is the conviction that has prompted me to undertake publication of the new American Mercury. I hope it will be the spirit in which its editor — who has complete autonomy of policy and action — will conduct the enterprise.*

*I have no private axes to grind. I do have public axes to grind: in behalf of good government, bold defense of our free American institutions, realistic pro-American policies in our foreign affairs.*

*Fortunately the Mercury has a great tradition of intelligence, valor and independence. These qualities have remained constant through the years, despite changes in form and content. Another constant has been good writing, geared to intellectually mature readers. I am mindful of the proud reputation of the magazine and anxious to live up to it. That, however, does not mean arbitrary imitation of the past. Publications, like all things human, evolve new approaches to meet the challenge of new times and interests; and it is well that they should.*

*I need hardly add that I make no pretensions to special literary insights, and gladly delegate those domains to the editor. Not everything that appears in the magazine will reflect my personal views, nor should it. My role is frankly that of a business man, eager to give creative writers and thinkers, especially younger people, the right of way to the public mind — in the interest of a better America and a freer world.*

*Clendenin J. Ryan*



## *In the Mercury's Opinion*

**I**T IS INTERESTING, and may be significant, that the gusty soul of Henry Mencken is wavering between the here and the hereafter at the exact moment that we are sending to press the first issue of the new AMERICAN MERCURY. For with this issue begins an effort to re-create the magazine in the Mencken tradition.

Not that we expect to be "another Mencken" — the decades do not repeat themselves; nor will the compact new MERCURY resemble in form or formula the big green book of the Twenties. But we do hope to transfuse some of the delicious juices from the

old MERCURY into the new, and to give these juices the seasoning of our own personality.

We will offer battle to most of Mencken's old adversaries as well as to some new ones. Mencken impaled a few: the Prohibitionists and William Jennings Bryan and

the sex puritans perished on his lance. But others have prospered and proliferated. The boobs have become bureaucrats; the censors have become commissars; the yahoos have been marshaled into pressure groups. The Common Men, shouting hallelujah-I'm-a'comin'-home, have joined the armies of those who specialize in millenia; and these armies are threatening the individual man wherever he makes a stand.

Now, perhaps even more than in the Twenties, is the time for those who value the human personality to attack those who would sacrifice it to Order and Security. Now is the time for those who love freedom and individual responsibility to assail those who would persuade men to become slaves so that they may sooner enjoy water closets and burial insurance.

Since Mencken's MERCURY there



has arisen the massive Cult of the Common Man; and this cult has seduced young men, even young writers, with its material blandishments. Men are now reveling in commonness — it is supposed to be a virtue; the Common Men have even succeeded in elevating one of their own to the White House, and we are told that this is good.

Against this cult we shall array as many young authors as we can find; for if there is to be hope in the world again, there must be a new realization that the business of a man is to aspire to be exceptional.

There is an aristocracy among men: an aristocracy of will, work, intelligence and character. On them depends whether the human procession advances or retreats. So instead of encouraging young Americans to relax and enjoy their commonness, we shall invite them to strive again.

This is not because we despise humble men; it is because we love an humble man. It is because we believe, with Mr. Charles Morgan, that "man was born to be loved or hated, to plow a field or write a poem, to win a battle or lose it, to take a risk, to make his soul; he is not on this earth to be counted as though he were a million beads on the adding machine of some gargantuan and idiot child."

Since Mencken's MERCURY there has been an increased effort to erase the differences among men. Men, we are told, must think alike, act alike, vote alike, spell their names alike, so that they can all be Orderly.

We shall encourage men to become different again. We shall urge races of men to cherish their racial characteristics, and we shall hope that individual men will dare to become Characters again.

There is now far too much "tolerance" in America. The tolerance racket is more deplorable than the numbers racket. We shall cry a new crusade of intolerance. Not racial intolerance nor the intolerance of difference, but the intolerance of bores, morons, world-savers, and damn fools. Man has been horribly put upon; we have been instructed that the sufferance of fools is a requirement of breeding. But the hell with it! We have suffered too long.

We shall not advocate the revival of the dunking stool, but we shall encourage the slamming of more doors, the stamping of more feet, the hurling of more garbage, the canceling of more subscriptions. Only thus can we hope to meditate in peace.

Since Mencken's MERCURY, too, we have had the Cult of the Happy. There is a paper shortage

today. A man can't find enough paper to wrap up a good bottle of whisky because of all the books that have been printed telling folks how to Get Happy.

The new MERCURY is opposed to Happiness, and no cultist should interrupt his incantations long enough to read us. The happiest creatures in the world are pigs lying in a wallow.

These are difficult days for the human spirit. We are not without sympathy for those who, like ourselves, are often torn and depressed, but we believe that serenity for thoughtful men still comes through understanding, and for this we must search alone and not in packs. Our happiness formula, if we have one, is composed of ingredients listed by Mr. Henry James: . . . "the acceptance of life, the respect for its mysteries, the endurance of its charges, the vitality of the will, the validity of character, the beauty of action, the seriousness, above all, of the great human passion."

Mencken thought of the old MERCURY as a politico-literary magazine. The new MERCURY will emphasize the literary — we are more interested in manners, morals, and the arts than in politics — but we can't avoid politics because it is here that the individual man is suffering his most appalling defeats. We can assail

boobs and censors only by invading their bureaucratic fastnesses.

During the past ten years the truth has been hard to come by in this country. Thoroughness and objectivity have nearly disappeared in the press. On the one side there have been the Roosevelt cultists, armed with mud buckets, lying in wait not only for any attackers of the Roosevelt myth but also for any stray reporter striving for objectivity.

On the other side there have been the pathologic Roosevelt haters, the hard-breathing minute men, equally incapable of objectivity. And behind both these groups there have been the usual peckerwoods in the government — the eternal censors — who have to be kicked in the stomach before they will ever release evidence of their own stupidities.

But not all the censors are in the government. Every little pressure group has hirelings who are reading copy, ready to bedevil any journal which dares to deviate.

There are few editors now who don't have to trim before these pressure group censors. And the larger a magazine or newspaper gets, the bigger the business, the greater the risk, the more the compromise. When you have three million subscribers, you can't risk offending 10 per cent of them.

So there is a need in this country for a monthly, meditative magazine of free discussion. A magazine which can strive for objectivity and thoroughness, but which does not have to trim before any censor; a magazine which can tell the government censors, the pressure group censors, the advertising censors, the subscriber censors — can tell them all to go censor themselves.

They fear and resent objectivity, but there is another weapon even more effective against poobahs, sachems, mahatmas, commissars, boobs, yahoos, censors, and peckerwoods. This is satire: they scatter before it like roaches when you stamp your foot. So the new MERCURY will employ satire.

There is nothing in this wicked world quite so hilarious as a jackass who, after being proclaimed king, decides that he is no longer a jackass. He pulls his purple vestments around him; he polishes his hooves; he perfumes his backside; he hides his long ears under a crown; he studies grammar; and he embraces the Cult of the Socially Conscious. But you need only peek under his vestments or lift his crown to see that he is still just a jackass.

The new MERCURY will be an

agency for the pulling aside of vestments and the lifting of crowns.

Surely, with taxes as they are, and with the atomic cloud hovering over us, free men should not be denied such little diversions as giving hot feet to pomposity and jabbing hat pins into fat bottoms.

We shall proceed on the assumption that, somehow, the world is going on; that ten, twenty, fifty years from now men will be doing more work and women less; that knowledge will have increased but wisdom will not; that rich men will still be acting like poor men with money; that the percentage of honest men and knaves, wise men and fools, will be about what it was in the Age of Pericles.

The new MERCURY will be a hopeful magazine. We believe that we will live to see the banner of freedom unfurled on a Ural mountain-top. And we believe that young Americans, rejecting the vice of mass thinking, will, like Mr. Dos Passos, come to understand that "this country was not founded to furnish glamorous offices for politicians, or to produce goods and services, or handouts of easy money. This country was founded to make men free."

# TRIBULATIONS of a WAR CORRESPONDENT



by Herbert Mathews

**M**Y GENERATION was brought up to worship Richard Harding Davis as the beau ideal, the absolute pinnacle of that exotic trade known as foreign correspondence. Today, several wars later, I have stopped worshipping Mr. Davis and the other revered names of his day. Davis, I think, could not bat in the same league with the men who covered the war in Korea, and no modern newspaper would print the embroidery and old lace which decorated his stories.

It takes a man and a technique as modern as a bazooka to cover the wars of this generation. Correspondents are no longer rear echelon supercargo. They are briefed before battles, go into the lines with the troops, endure the ugly business of combat with them, and still make next morning's newspapers with the stories of what they have seen.

As a practitioner of this trade for a good many years, I can tell you that correspondents often view their occupation as a little like that of the Roman gladiator. Some obscure impulse led the gladiator to risk death or wounds in a dangerous game for the edification of a public which was quite likely to take his efforts for granted. The correspondent's job has something of that quality.

Yet every newspaper beginner, and a host of youngsters who haven't even begun, aspires to what he thinks is the romantic life of the foreign correspondent. "Everyone wants to be a war correspondent," we used to say sarcastically as we broiled or shivered in one or another of the world's uncomfortable spots. We were not surprised when we heard that the outbreak of the Korean conflict had signaled a stampede in newspaper offices all over the

country, the cub reporters and veterans of other wars competing for accreditation while the old-timers sighed enviously in the wings.

People are shocked if they stop to consider that the war correspondent may enjoy his work. I have often been reproached for suggesting that I had a good time covering the wars in Abyssinia, Spain, and World War II.

If enjoying a war is immoral for a war correspondent, it would be just as logical to call a doctor immoral for describing with professional gusto a revolting operation. There is no ethical content to this kind of writing. The function of a reporter or a correspondent is to present what happens without regard for the moral factors involved.

Some readers are certain that a reporter must necessarily champion whatever cause he happens to be writing about. For instance, I have been branded as a fascist for covering the Abyssinian war from the Italian side, a Red for covering the Spanish Civil War from the Loyalist side, and an imperialist for presenting the British case in India. It has been hinted darkly that I am the willing recipient of "Fascist gold," "Moscow gold," or "British gold," whereas I have actually taken only the gold of the New York *Times*, for legitimate services.

What the reader often *does* detect is the correspondent's bias — his natural bias as a human being. If everybody accepts the bias — say, in favor of American GI's — no one minds, or even terms it bias at all. But if the public is sharply divided, as it was in the Spanish Civil War, one side is certain to be unhappy. Editors try to overcome this situation by presenting both sides of the case, but the result is a very doubtful impartiality.

Let us be clear about it. The only things that matter are honesty, thoroughness and understanding. A reader has a right to the truth and to all the facts, to the best of the writer's ability to find them. But he has no right to expect or demand that a journalist agree with him.

The reporter's despair is that he knows what has happened, he probably has seen it happen, but he has no power to make his readers believe what he writes.

Once I was trying to convince my readers that the Italians were winning the war in Abyssinia, that the tall tales of great victories on the Ethiopian side could not be true. Those of us who were with the Italian troops saw what was happening. On the Abyssinian side, newsmen were not allowed to go to the front and had to rely on handouts. Yet, because everyone wanted the Italians to lose,

my stories were either disbelieved or taken with reserve, until the Italians drove into Addis Ababa and it was all over.

The Abyssinian cause was harmed because the truth was not believed and the facts faced in time; the reader was cheated because he was given a false impression.

Even worse in this respect was the Spanish Civil War. Consider, for example, the bombing of Guernica on April 26, 1937. G. L. Steer, the New York Times correspondent in Bilbao, was first to reach the city while it still lay smoking. By the time the smoke cleared away, Steer wrote disgustedly that the incident led to "some of the most horrible and inconsistent lying heard by Christian ears since Ananias was carried out feet foremost to his long, central-heated home."

History now accepts the fact that the Germans bombed Guernica for terrorist reasons; it was their first experiment with the technique later used with such devastating thoroughness on the cities of Western Europe. But the journalists failed to convey this simple, terrifying fact to their readers.

Nor could I find readers to believe other simple truths — for instance, that there were never any Russian infantrymen on the Loyalist side. An impartial body

appointed by the League of Nations confirmed this after the war, but there must be innumerable readers of the *New York Times* who still believe Russian infantry fought in Spain. And it was a long time before editors as well as readers grasped the fact that there was an Italian expeditionary force in Spain fighting for Franco.

## II

The trouble is that the reader seldom has a yardstick to measure a story in the paper. In the end, his own prejudices will be his guide: his openmindedness or lack of it, his credulity or incredulity. He is inclined to go by simple rules.

If he knows a story is written under censorship he distrusts it, and yet he is wrong to do so. Even editors fall into that error. I feel strongly on the subject because I have written for many years through censorships. It is a fact that an experienced correspondent can get a great deal through censorship, and in most cases censors cannot force correspondents to send falsehoods. They can prevent certain truths from being sent from a particular spot at a particular time, but that is another matter.

War corresponding is almost always done under censorship, and everyone understands and respects the reasons for censorship in war — if it is his own war. But in someone else's war it is likely to

be considered sinister, as I discovered in Abyssinia and Spain.

Americans have no reason to distrust the reports of their foreign correspondents, even though they sometimes do. However, readers in totalitarian countries have a right to be utterly skeptical of everything they read. It was Mussolini, a good newspaperman in his day, who best expressed this difference.

"In a totalitarian regime," Benito once remarked, "the press is an element of the regime, a force at the service of that regime. That which is harmful is avoided; that which is useful is adopted. . . . The freest press in the world is the Italian press. . . . Elsewhere newspapers are grouped in the hands of a few individuals who consider the journal as a true and proper industry, like steel or leather. Italian journalism is free because it serves a regime."

Suppose our correspondents in Korea had avoided "that which is harmful"!

A correspondent learns, if he does not know it intuitively, that there is nothing so effective or satisfying as the simple truth. War corresponding has no other value to readers and to posterity. Writing up communiques and briefings back at headquarters, scores or hundreds of miles away from the front lines, has no permanent value. It gives readers the

same general idea of what is happening that the rear echelon staff gets, which is a beclouded view — hours or even a day or two behind events. The stuff that came out of Tokyo about the fighting in Korea was a perfect example of the wooziness and confusion of the news at headquarters.

Only from the correspondent on the spot can you find out what is really happening. It may be no more than a part of the whole, but it is a description of what a man has seen with his own eyes and knows to be true. That is why correspondents go to the front.

The war correspondent does not write history; he provides the material for history. Homer Bigart's story of the fall of Taejon, to take a fine example, can be used by a historian fifty years from now. The hogwash that came out of Tokyo that same day will be ignored.

To get such stories into a newspaper, and on time, often involves much pain and travail, and the frequent risk of death. For example, there is nothing more dangerous for a correspondent, as Korea proved once more, than to cover a retreat with lines wide open and the opposing side coming down on the flanks. In Korea that job cost the lives of at least two correspondents.

Again, fighting in the mountains takes a heavy toll of the cor-



respondent's physical resources. Reporters are not trained to climb up and down mountains. Yet they had to do it in Korea, and in Italy we moved from one mountain to another all the way from Caserta to Bologna.

The reward a correspondent gets for what he endures is sometimes heartbreaking. I remember particularly covering the capture of Teruel by the Loyalists in December 1937. Ernest Hemingway was with me and it was a great day. We were on the go for twenty hours and finally returned to Valencia at midnight, where I spent four hours writing my dispatch and getting it off to Madrid by courier. I thought it was one of the best stories I had ever written. Yet it was cut in two, buried on an inside page, and I was reproached for over-filling.

Add to this common hazard the additional possibility that your story may be garbled in transmission or never reach your newspaper at all, and it becomes clear that war corresponding is a highly dubious joy.

There are the same differences in war correspondents as in soldiers. Some are braver than others; some are not brave at all, and they make life miserable for other correspondents by their caution

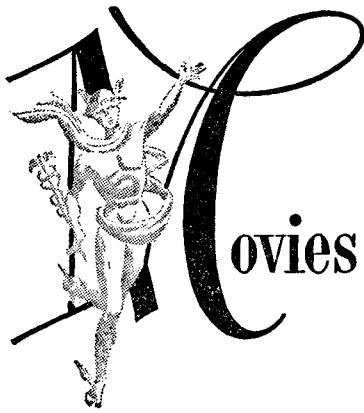
or fear. And there are, unavoidably, a few fakers. There are correspondents who glamorize war, but they are seldom at the front, or else they are overgrown kids with no moral sense.

The job wears a man down in the long run — not physically, but in his sensibilities. I will never forget the shock with which I discovered in the Sicilian campaign that I was bored with war corresponding. There was no zest left in it for me. It took a really big story — the landing at Salerno, the taking of Naples, to arouse any enthusiasm.

As the years pass, a correspondent gets a little more cautious, a little more careful. Only the biggest stories get to be worth big risks. A man feels more and more that his luck won't hold out forever. He begins to think of the others whose luck failed them: Tom Treanor, Ben Robertson, Ray Clapper, Ernie Pyle.

And yet, just as he reaches the point when he thinks he is ready to sit back and say, "Let the young men do the job," the bloody, primitive, curiously exciting, tremendous game begins again, and he knows it is a game he will never stop playing as long as there is an editor who will send him to the front.

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***Hollywood  
at  
Twilight***

CHARLES BRACKETT and Billy Wilder have formed, for some time now, Hollywood's most eminent picture-making collaboration. With Brackett doing the producing, Wilder the directing, and both of them joining in the writing, they have established an enviable reputation as the most successful precedent smashers and code violators in the industry. They were the makers of "Double Indemnity" and "The Lost Weekend" which worked like a couple of shots of bourbon to loosen up rigid Hollywood conceptions of what could make acceptable and popular film fare.

"Sunset Boulevard," their latest and most ambitious production, is characteristically audacious and inventive. It also operates in terms of sufficient intelligence and skill to set it leagues apart from the skimpy, timid, and budget-worried cur-

rent run of pictures. It has weaknesses but they are not enough to keep it from being the picture of the year. And while I can think of some recent movies that are more closely integrated and make a more forcible impression, I can't recall any that are quite as adroit, provocative, and contemporary.

"Sunset Boulevard" is, among other things, the first genuinely introspective picture to come out of Hollywood. Like all works of art which get away from merely manipulating the audience, it moves in an atmosphere of doubt and questioning, not merely about its characters, but about the makers themselves, the history of the movies and thereby, though somewhat obliquely, about the history of people in these troubled times. Since self-analysis is a new kind of game to Hollywood, it doesn't move in

the abysses with the ease of a Russian novel, but at least it never gets bogged down and never loses sight of its targets. It also has the distinction of bringing back to the screen two of the greatest figures motion pictures have produced, Gloria Swanson and Eric von Stroheim. Unfortunately, the latter is keyed into the picture through a character and a kind of direction that only allows him to use an acornfull of his remarkable talents.

For example, von Stroheim is, with the possible exception of Cagney, the owner of the most expressive hands in the movies. But, except for one scene in which he majestically shoos someone up a flight of steps, his arms are clapped rigidly against his sides as though he were a sailor about to make a depth dive. This certainly couldn't have been his own idea. The role of Max von Mayerling, former Hollywood director turned butler and protector to an aging screen star, requires, as Brackett and Wilder see it, a sombre, stoical demeanour which straitjackets von Stroheim so completely that you can almost see him grinding his teeth in frustration. (I was reminded of the movie in which Toumanova, one of the world's greatest ballerinas, appeared after being lured from the stage, and was hardly allowed to walk, much less

dance.) Nevertheless, through sheer magnificence of personality, a voice like a cathedral organ, and consummate artistry, von Stroheim turns in a powerful evocation of thwarted greatness and anguished monomania.

Miss Swanson's role as Norma Desmond, the quondam Hollywood queen who lives in a huge, decaying mansion, surrounded by photographs of herself, nursing her memories as tenaciously as a kid sucking a peppermint stick, and venomously plotting a comeback, allows her to display histrionic gifts unmatched in any screen performance of recent years. The movie displays her in endless gradations, from a modishly dressed, still immensely attractive siren to a ravaged psychopath. Her vocal pyrotechnics take on an almost symphonic range. They are adapted to reproduce the offstage hamming of an actress who never drops her artificial manner, and to contain the intense, wavering emotions of a split, obsessed personality. It is a complex task brilliantly executed by a performer of terrific natural magnetism and control. Although the Brackett-Wilder technique, which works overtime to make its players neatly credible, does not quite let Miss Swanson come out from behind it and use all she has in her bag of magic, the merger of the

two period styles is, on the whole, profitable.

The tension between the principals of the picture and the presence of a number of past and present Hollywood personalities (Cecil B. DeMille, Buster Keaton, Anna Q. Nilsson, Hedda Hopper), are shrewdly exploited to make the story spiral back on itself, so that every situation and line is charged with an additional meaning. Thus, the blundering script-writer (William Holden) cracks to Norma Desmond, "You used to be pretty big in pictures," and the actress harshly explodes, "I still am big! It's the pictures that got small." At which point you can't help applying the statement to the film in front of you and noting that the vintage actors tend to dwarf even the most skillful of the juniors. And when Desmond looks at a scene from an old Swanson picture and shouts, "They don't make faces like that any more," you are likely to find yourself nodding in agreement.

The clash of temperaments, styles and periods, which is the fundamental theme of the period, is sharply (perhaps too sharply) realized by these devices. They tend to steer your curiosity towards the production rather than the picture and make you wonder what went on behind the scenes and in the heads of the members

of the cast. Some sort of conflict did, in fact, occur between von Stroheim and Wilder. It was reported that von Stroheim was brought over from Paris by Wilder who greatly admired the early pictures directed by von Stroheim. Relations between the two men were pleasant enough at first, but by the time the film was finished they had gone to pieces and the men were not on speaking terms, mostly because of von Stroheim's continually overridden pleas to have a little more color put in his role.

The plot of the picture is, in itself, a pretty contrived melodramatic affair that serves chiefly to bring its major characters together and place them in dramatic juxtapositions. It opens up with a jack-in-the-box shot of a corpse spread-eagled photogenically in a phosphorescent swimming pool attached to Norma Desmond's grotesque mansion. The corpse — named Joe Gillis — promptly begins to talk. He — or it — goes on talking throughout the picture, drily explaining the action and occasionally oversimplifying and misinterpreting events, as if the authors were a little worried about the implications of their material and uncertain of its reception.

Nearly the entire first half of the picture is made to depend, somewhat weakly, on Corpse

Gillis's car. While a convertible may rate unusually high in Los Angeles, the loss of one doesn't usually cause a normal male to become a script doctor for an ex-star's infantile treatment of the Salome story, her kept man, and, finally, her clay pigeon. However, Gillis's desperate attempts to elude the auto finance beagles does allow the picture to take you on a gimmicky, brilliantly observant tour of contemporary Hollywood.

The picture contains enough scintillating scenes to liven up a dozen average productions. Each one is a kind of minor triumph of screen craftsmanship, not only because it is perfectly paced, shot, and acted but also because it contains the results of a hawk-eyed and keen-eared concentration on actual life. The people seem to have been lifted with tongs out of their daily existence and placed, wriggling, worried, and fatigued, on to the screen for just the right number of moments and movements. In fact, the Brackett-Wilder combine frequently gets so pleased with these scenes that they forget about maintaining a plausible continuity between them.

It takes some dubious coincidences and pretty creaky devices to get Gillis established in the star's mansion. After mistaking the place for an abandoned es-

tate, Gillis is himself mistaken for the deliverer of a coffin for the star's dead chimpanzee — a bit of rusty comedy about lonely ladies that must have been hoisted off some script junk-heap. Except for some cinema tricks that do not come off — such as the burial of the chimp and repeated shots of the Swanson hands twisted up claw fashion in what look like arthritic attacks — the depiction of Gillis's stay in this tomb of mouldering passions is a masterful affair. All the possibilities of the baroque milieu and people are exploited to the full, even to such grisly items as a family of rats playing in the deserted swimming pool.

The contrast to this museum is supplied by Gillis's attempts to break out of the snares of luxury and guilt. Gillis's adventures include his falling rather mushily in love with his best friend's fiancée ("You smell," he tells her in one of the most cockeyed love speeches ever, "like freshly laundered linen"), and trying to write a script that will be both good and saleable, a formidable feat indeed. The pictorialization of the life of the younger, half-successful Hollywood set is brilliantly accurate, sharply pinning down the latest styles of talk and dress, the newest affectations and the newest anxieties.

Holden's acting, though it

lacks the strength and opulence of von Stroheim's or Miss Swanson's, is sincere and suggestive. Moving with idiosyncratic grace and elegance, he plays his role with remarkable economy, communicating with a faint smile or grimace emotions it would take an ordinary novelist pages to convey. Nancy Olson plays his girl with brash, high-pitched innocence that sets your teeth on edge. It is probably the best that can be done with a character you are meant to like.

Essentially the picture is about the difference between the two generations and what happens when they collide. As the era is portrayed, the twenties are shown to have been dominated by people of great talent and temperament, half-mad with pride and willing to go batty rather than lower their aims or standards. They were grand — the picture seems to say — but too eccentric and out of touch with reality to last very long. The people of the forties, on the other hand, are safe, cautious, and a little humdrum, but modest and wholesome. The unlucky in both generations come to grief in opposite ways. Interested primarily in talent and style, the twenties people forget about the law of self-preservation and consequently ruin themselves. Interested primarily in self-preser-

vation, the younger group tend to ruin their talents. The Brackett-Wilder analysis isn't the last word on the subject but it does let them shape a thought-provoking representation of Hollywood history. It also represents the rest of the nation.

After all, America as a whole has been washed over by the same vast tides of peacetime prosperity and depression and war-boom prosperity. Each of these has left groups of people high and dry with such different ways of looking at life that they scarcely talk the same language and hardly know how to work together. The tragedy both in and outside the picture stems from the fact that every group seems to have got hold of a piece of the truth about living, but nobody has quite been able to put enough of the pieces together. And while the rest of America is staring into an atomic mist, mustering all its forces to prepare for a new age, Hollywood is watching the television antennae write "finis" to a movie era across the American skyline. So that "Sunset Boulevard" is not only about the faded dreams and crumbling mansions, triumphs and follies of the Hollywood twenties, but underneath it all, in a dim poignant and symbolic fashion, about those of a whole epoch.

—WILLIAM POSTER

# PLAN FOR A POLICE FORCE

by Ely Culbertson

SOON AFTER the invasion of South Korea, the American Embassy in Paris was swamped by young men volunteering to serve against the Communists. Similar applications were made by the thousands in Rome, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, and other cities. All were refused. In Lima, Peru, our Embassy even *advertised* that it would not accept foreign volunteers.

While our Government was thus rejecting whole divisions of volunteers abroad, it was hastily drafting young Americans at home, and struggling to reinforce our hard-pressed troops in time to prevent their being run out of Korea altogether. Except for some token assistance, the United States stood alone beside the South Koreans, bearing almost the whole cost, in lives and money, of a major Pacific war. As one Senator put it, "We furnish the blood, and the UN the flags!"

These bitter words voiced the questions of thousands. Why does the United States fight almost

single-handed, when the vast manpower reserves of fifty-two anti-Communist nations remain untouched? Every foreign soldier rejected means an American drafted in his place. Why are all these volunteers turned away?

I submit that this situation calls for the immediate creation of a United Nations police force into which these volunteers could be mobilized to act in case of any present or future aggression anywhere in the world. I submit that such a UN Police Authority can be set up *now*, that it will require no revision of the UN Charter, and that *its establishment cannot be blocked by Russia*. The plan is simple, concrete, and can be put into operation within 90 days. Unlike the so-called Acheson plan, which is nothing but a rehash of Article 43 of the UN Charter — an article that has been dead and buried these five years — the plan for a UN Police Authority envisages the establishment of a real UN police force.

The United States Government



should propose to the General Assembly a resolution for the establishment of a UN Police Authority with well-defined powers, either by a recommending resolution of the General Assembly, or under Article 51 of the Charter which affirms "the inherent right of collective self-defense," or by a combination of these two means.

The Police Authority would have the delegated power to organize and manage a special International Contingent, and to make use of it whenever it deemed aggression had occurred. The Authority would have no other power, thereby preserving the sovereignty of the member-states and the full control of their own armed forces.

The Police Authority, acting by simple majority vote, could consist of nine delegates — three from the United States (as the principal supporter), three from the British Commonwealth and France, and three *collectively* selected by the smaller member-states. Eventually, provision could be made for the admission of individual delegates from Italy, Germany and Japan.

This is but a suggested representation. The important point lies in the *mechanism* of the Police Authority, able to act without a veto. The UN General Assembly — where each state has one vote, and where the vital interests of

major states may be jeopardized by the necessity of securing from smaller states the necessary two-thirds majority — was never meant to be an executive organ. The UN Police Authority would play the role of such an executive organ as long as the Security Council is deadlocked by the veto.

The total UN armed forces would consist of two parts: the national armed forces of member-states, which owe their allegiance solely to their own governments; and a special mobile force, called here the International Contingent, which would owe its allegiance solely to the UN, and which would be permanently under control of the Police Authority. This International Contingent would operate either alone or as an auxiliary to participating national armed forces, under a joint command.

The International Contingent would be a well paid, highly trained, balanced force of land, sea and air units, equipped with the best weapons. It would be composed entirely of volunteers, not "earmarked" as units by governments, but recruited by the Police Authority *directly* from the citizens of various nations. The national governments would have nothing to do with these volunteers except for permission to recruit them.

The purpose of the Interna-

tional Contingent is to create for the UN a hand-picked, combat-ready, professional armed force — a kind of Foreign Legion of fighters for peace. Its members, though organized as far as possible in national units, would cease to be citizens of their countries of origin during their terms of service. It would be stationed, by agreement, in internationalized bases in sensitive areas, as well as in Western Germany and Japan. In Korea it would replace the American troops of occupation.

The cost of the International Contingent would be borne by the participating states in proportion to their resources. This means that most of the financial support would come from the United States, but it would still be a great saving in lives and money for us, since a strong International Contingent would reduce proportionately the armed forces that we would otherwise have to supply. The size of the International Contingent might vary from a few divisions to start with, to possibly scores of divisions, especially if we included the hundreds of thousands of Germans and Japanese who are eager to volunteer.

These volunteers for the International Contingent — and this is a revolutionary point — would be recruited from citizens of all nations (even including non-mem-

bers of the UN) *except* the Big Five: Russia, China, France, Britain, and the United States. The reason for excluding these major powers is that they have their own large military establishments. The purpose of the International Contingent would not be to organize the manpower of major states (which is already organized), but to utilize the vast, largely untapped manpower of the fifty-odd lesser states. Individually, these states are weak, but if even a fraction of their manpower were integrated into an International Contingent, they could collectively form a formidable military power against aggression — a permanent ally of the national armed forces of all peaceful nations.

Furthermore, the presence of large blocs of nationals of major powers would, in case of a major war, cause these blocs to line up against each other and thus nullify largely the value of the International Contingent. Another advantage of this provision is that Russia and China (whose status is doubtful) would be automatically excluded.

## II

Here is an illustration of how the International Contingent, when established, might work out in practice. Bulgaria, under secret orders from her Russian masters,

invades Greece. The UN Police Authority, acting by a majority vote upon Greece's complaint, orders Bulgaria to cease and desist; but Bulgaria continues her attack. Then the Police Authority orders units of the International Contingent — some of them probably stationed in Greece — in support of the Greek armed forces. The fight continues until Bulgaria is defeated, is forced to pay reparations, and the Bulgarian instigators of the war are punished. Should Soviet Russia intervene in support of Bulgaria with her own armed forces, then the national armed forces of the various UN members (by decision of their own governments) would be available in support of the International Contingent.

How about Russia? Could she not, with some reason, accuse the United States and its allies of building up a gigantic legion of mercenaries for an imperialistic war against her? To meet this objection, the UN Police plan specifically includes a standing offer to Soviet Russia which if accepted by her would render any successful aggression against her (and by her against others) militarily *impossible*. The offer is: 1) an effective international control of atomic energy; 2) drastic and worldwide reduction (up to 90 per cent) in the production of all heavy weapons — from a tank

to a fighting plane — on the basis of a world quota of production, within which each nation would have an individual quota; such control of both the atomic and heavy weapons will be guaranteed by strict inspection, no veto, and punishment of violators; 3) all occupying powers to evacuate Germany, Austria and other countries, replacing their troops with the International Contingent; in countries formerly occupied and in China, new and free elections shall be held under supervision of the Police Authority.

Considering the still overwhelming superiority of the United States in atomic weapons and in industrial potential, these proposals would be specific proof to the peoples of the world that the United States seeks neither the appeasement of Russia nor a preventive war against Russia; but a *guaranteed* peace. When and if Soviet Russia agrees to these terms, then the International Contingent would become the nucleus of an international police force; and the Police Authority could be abolished in favor of a revised Security Council and World Court, operating without a veto in defined matters of aggression and armament for aggression. Then there will be peace in the world.

To an aggressive Russia, the

only winning answer is a show-down. To a peaceful Russia, content to remain within her own frontiers, the UN Police plan offers the same guarantees against armed aggression as would prevail for other member-states. There is nothing being asked of Soviet Russia that the United States is not willing to concede. We will prove once and for all that we are ready and anxious to throw away our guns, provided Soviet Russia throws away her guns *at the same time*, and provided she opens her books for inspection as we are ready to open ours.

What will this UN Police Authority plan to do for the United States, our allies, and world peace? To quote Congressman Walter H. Judd, "This is one proposal under which the United States can get more than it gives." The plan would save American lives, and the lives of our British and French Allies, because this International Contingent could handle alone all but major breaches of the peace; and in the event of a world war, it could save hundreds of thousands of lives since it could draw upon the untapped reserves of smaller nations who alone number more than three hundred million population, not counting Germany and Japan. Already hundreds of thousands of eager

volunteers throughout the world are waiting for a chance to fight under the UN flag.

To smaller nations, the International Contingent would represent for the first time a dependable, organized force for their own collective defense. They would cease to be the football of power politics of major states, for an aggression against the smallest of them would automatically bring forth the power of the International Contingent.

Another advantage of this plan is that it would save money. It would be possible to support the International Contingent at a fraction of the cost required for a force of American GIs of similar size. Most of the military equipment for such a force could also be produced abroad at a much lower cost than in the United States. It would increase our own security, not only by adding to our manpower, but by having a UN force stationed at key places in the world, always ready *in time* to pounce on an aggression the instant it begins.

Another very important advantage of the plan is that it could bring into the common pool, under the Police Authority, the armed strength of Germans and Japanese, without the danger of creating a Frankenstein. Even if their divisions were commanded by their own officers, the Police

Authority could control their distribution, deprive them of an essential arm such as air power, and control their indispensable supplies of weapons and ammunition. These countries, more than other nations, are begging for a chance to save themselves from the Communist steamroller.

Above all, the UN Police plan has a far better chance than anything else (short of atomic ultimatum now) to avert the third world war *in time*. Our program of rearmament of our Atlantic Pact allies will require two or three years. Even then, the best we could hope for, including American divisions stationed in Europe, is about forty divisions — against Russia's two hundred divisions. During these two or three years, Soviet Russia will accumulate enough atomic bombs to threaten the destruction of many cities in America and Europe. Russia may even nullify our rearmament efforts in Western Europe by driving most of our European allies into abject neutrality with threats of atomic destruction. It is difficult to see how our position will be improved two or three years hence, if we allow Soviet Russia the time necessary to complete the building of her atomic stockpiles, in exchange for time to build thirty or forty divisions that will be overwhelmed.

Let us see what would be our situation with and without the UN Police plan in December, 1951. *Without* the International Contingent we might have in the Atlantic Pact countries of Europe ten or fifteen divisions, of which half at least will be French divisions. Western Germany will be barely rearming. The best we can hope for would be eight divisions, probably badly equipped, against at least twenty Eastern German divisions equipped with the best that Communist Russia has to offer. The continued opposition of France, and the interminable diplomatic conferences, would prevent Western Germany from rising from her knees. There would be five or six new American divisions — all of that a pitiful obstacle to the mighty war machine of Soviet Russia and her satellites. Meanwhile, in Soviet Russia, atomic production will jump to at least one and probably two atomic bombs per week — equal to at least one American city per week reduced to rubble.

*With* the International Contingent, the situation would be drastically different. Once the fear of rearming Western Germany is removed through control by the UN Police Authority, the rearmament of Germany could proceed as fast as it did under Hitler. It would be possible with the help of the United States to

build up forty or even fifty divisions, while the armament industry in the Ruhr will be in full blast. At the same time, other volunteers could be organized and incorporated in the International Contingent, from South America to South Korea. And all this could be accomplished without affecting in the slightest our rearmament of the national armed forces in France and other Atlantic Pact countries. Once confronted with such a formidable array of divisions, *plus* the vast American industrial potential, *plus* the grim determination of a unified world under the UN Police Authority, the chances are strong that, rather than risk a war which she cannot win, Russia would seek a world peace guaranteed to all, which she could have for the asking. The Moscow rulers are realists.

The principal objection to this plan comes from a powerful group in the State Department who have not given up hope of a satisfactory settlement with Soviet Russia through patient diplomacy. "The UN Police plan," one of them said to me, "is the nearest thing to a declaration of war on Stalin. Once you start building this International Contingent, you will slam the door on a possible diplomatic settlement. You can't make Stalin mad and expect him to become friendly."

After all we have learned in the past few years, how can anyone still hope for Stalin's friendship? I agree that Stalin may become mad if the plan is adopted, but then, he is congenitally and incurably *very* mad at the United States. The only language that Stalin or any other Communist understands is the language of force; and the only force he respects is *superior* force. The basic purpose of the UN Police plan is to create the condition of a superior force now, as the only chance of averting World War III later.

If Soviet Russia is bluffing (as is highly probable), then the UN Police plan will call the bluff. And if Soviet Russia has decided on war in the near future, then all the more reason to organize the International Contingent without losing a moment's time. The waste of another year may cost us unnecessarily a million lives.

### III

Secretary of State Dean Acheson, driven by the clamor for a UN police force, has presented to the General Assembly a plan under which, "Each member nation would designate within its national armed forces a United Nations unit or units, to be specially trained and equipped and continuously maintained in readiness

for prompt service on behalf of the United Nations." Taken together, these "earmarked units" of member-states would constitute the UN police force.

On quick reading, the plan looks all right. But after clearing away the verbiage, it is evident that there is very little left upon which to build a workable UN police force. Here is what the Acheson plan really means:

When aggression occurs and the General Assembly issues a call, each government retains the right to decide for itself when and where to send its earmarked unit into action, or whether to send it at all. Before aggression occurs, each government retains for itself the right to decide how large or how small his unit will be, or whether to have any such unit at all. In fact, it may decide to send a simple ambulance unit.

True, Mr. Acheson says, "To assist in the organization, training and equipping of such units, we will suggest that a United Nations military adviser be appointed." Unfortunately, a military adviser can only advise. In fact, the whole plan is based on nothing more than advice that no one needs to listen to, agreements that no one needs to make, and the naïve hope that sovereign states will place the more remote interests of humanity above their own immediate interests.

This plan for voluntary contributions of earmarked forces is as old as the confederation of ancient Greek city-states. It has never worked and it never will. The best proof is in Korea. Here was an ideal opportunity to test the principle of voluntary contingents. Fifty-two nations proclaimed North Korea an aggressor in a solemn resolution, asking each other to help the U.S. armed forces. Mr. Trygve Lie, the UN Secretary-General, made an eloquent world-wide appeal for armed contingents. It is known that our State Department, behind the scenes, moved heaven and earth to get these contingents. Many free nations depended on our continued good will; all realized fully that the Korean struggle was not an isolated incident but part of a world-wide struggle against Communist terrorism.

And what happened? In spite of all efforts, it is doubtful that more than a division and a half could be squeezed out of our fifty-two allies — *thirty thousand men out of seven hundred million people!*

This does not mean that the other nations are selfish or ungrateful. But it does mean that when the government of a nation asks parents to give up their sons for a war thousands of miles away, it must have compelling and immediate reasons.

A loose, agglomerate force,



the various parts of which owe allegiance to various governments, is not the kind of force to oppose the iron divisions of the Communist war machine. What the UN needs is a professional force of volunteers, welded together under one discipline, one command and one allegiance.

I predict that the Acheson plan will fail. Furthermore, it may do incalculable harm by wasting another precious year in futile attempts, thus profiting no one but the aggressor Russia.

The diplomats of the State Department, hard pressed by the aroused public opinion, and unable or too timid to offer a real solution, simply dug into their files and brought up the old plan of "voluntary contingents" — throwing a bone to public opinion. The danger is that public opinion, once again misled by the clever *montage* of the State Department propaganda, will relax in the comfortable delusion that at last something worthwhile is being done to save American lives by a plan to get better help from the United Nations. That help will never be forthcoming unless something far better than the Acheson method is adopted.

#### IV

The UN Police Authority plan is not the product of hasty and untested thinking, but rather of

long years of careful, collective effort. Five years ago the Citizens Committee for United Nations Reform was organized. Then a research body of experts on international affairs formulated concrete solutions of the three problems the UN had to face — the veto, the armament race, and a workable police force — into a proposal called the ABC Plan for revision of the UN, and a national movement was started. Since then, national organizations with an aggregate membership of more than seven million people have joined the movement, including the American Legion, and resolutions supporting it have been introduced in Congress with substantial sponsorship.

Events make movements. The logic of events today has brought the movement for an effective UN Police Force from, to quote Senator Styles Bridges, "a remote contingency of two years ago, to a burning reality of today." I believe that this same logic of events could bring about the realization of the UN Police Authority Plan within a year and possibly sooner.

Last August, twenty-one Senators and eighteen Congressmen introduced in the Congress a resolution embodying this plan. It is most significant that Senators of sharply opposite political views, such as Senators Bricker

and Lehman, Humphrey and Mundt, or Margaret Chase Smith and O'Connor, are united on it. Senator John J. Sparkman, now a delegate to the UN General Assembly, said in introducing the resolution: "The UN Police Authority resolution is a new and most timely adaption of our proposal made two years ago. I cannot help but think that had our proposal been adopted then, we would not be fighting virtually alone in Korea today. In fact, there might not have been any Korean problem at all. I firmly believe that an international police force along the lines we propose will come, because it must come."

America's most precious possession is her reservoir of young men and women. This is the true basis of America's power, far greater than her land, mines, or industrial plants. Should an act of aggression such as the Korean invasion light the fires of World War III, there is grave danger that the United States will be bled white, as were European nations in the first two world wars. We can avoid this by organizing throughout the world the hundreds of thousands of potential volunteers who are eager (and should be eager) to fight side by side with us in the common struggle for the survival of civilization. This is no question

of trying to save American lives at the price of the lives of others. This nation is ready to assume the principal share of sacrifice. But elementary justice demands that those who are able should carry at least in part their own burden of sacrifice.

It is for lack of a real UN police force today that so many of our men have died in Korea. There is no telling how many more will have to die if we face new strokes of Russian aggression in other remote corners of the world. In short, it will be a crime against humanity if we delay any longer.

Resolutions are now before both Houses of Congress, calling upon the President to lay suitable proposals before the United Nations. Every father and mother should have a personal interest in this life-saving proposal. If public opinion gives one last big push, there is every likelihood that this plan will go through. If it does, we can avert World War III, and lay the solid foundation of a lasting federation of nations.

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*The author, Chairman of the Citizens' Committee for United Nations Reform, will be glad to send further information about any questions about the U.N. Police Authority Plan free of charge. He may be addressed in care of the Committee at 16 East 62d Street, New York 21, N. Y.*

# THIS MORTAL COIL

A STORY

by Frank O'Connor



EVERY SUNDAY morning, at a time when the rest of the city was at church, a few of us met down the quays. We ranged from a clerical student with scruples to a roaring atheist. The atheist, Dan Turner, was the one I liked best. He was a well-built, fresh-coloured man who looked like a sailor or farmer, but was really a County Council official. Part of my sympathy for him was due to the way he was penalised for his opinions. Long before, at the age of eighteen, he had had to give evidence in a taxation case and refused to take the oath. That finished him. Though he was easily the cleverest man in the Courthouse, he would never be secretary or anything approaching it. And knowing that, and knowing the constant intriguing to keep him from promotion only made him more positive and truculent. Not that he thought of himself as either; in his own opinion he was a perfect example of the English genius for compromise, but the nearest thing he

ever got to passing some remark he disagreed with was to raise his eyebrows into his hair, turn his blue eyes the other way and whistle.

"You take things to the fair, Dan," I said to him once.

"All I ask," he replied reasonably enough, "is that bloody idiots will keep their opinions to themselves and not be working them off on me."

"If you want bloody idiots to do anything of the kind," I said, "you should go somewhere you won't be made a target of for putting them in their place."

"And if we all do that, this country will never be anything but a home for idiots," he said.

"Oh, of course, if you want to make a martyr of yourself in the interests of the country, that's a different thing, but it seems to me very queer conduct for a man that calls himself a rationalist. I call that sentimentality."

He nearly struck me over calling it sentimentality, but, of course, that's what it was. For

all the man's study, he was as emotional as a child. He was cut to the heart by all the intrigues against him. He lived in an old house on the quays with a pious maiden sister called Madge who adored him, cluck-clucked and tut-tutted his most extravagant statements, and went to Mass every morning to pray for his conversion. Though it hurt him that she called in outside aid (even if it was purely imaginary), he was too big a man to hold it against her, and, according to his lights, he did his best to bring her to some sense of proportion.

"That's not religion at all," he would shout, slapping the arm of his chair in vexation. "That's damn superstition." But Madge only pitied and loved him the more for it, and went on in her own way believing in God, ghosts, fairies and nutmegs for lumbago.

It wasn't until well on in his thirties that Dan fell in love, and then he did it in a way that no rationalist could approve of. Tessa Bridie wasn't very young either, but, as with many another fine girl in the provinces, she found the fellows that wanted to marry her were not always those she wanted to marry. As a last resort she was holding on to a clerk in an insurance office called Mc-Guinness, with jet-black curly hair, nationalist sentiments and

great aspirations after the religious life, which, I suppose, is the only sort of life a clerk in an insurance office can aspire to.

In spite of the way he had been spoiled by Madge, Tessa was convinced for a long time that Dan was the answer to her prayers. But Dan, in his simple, straightforward way, wouldn't let her be. He explained that he couldn't be the answer to anyone's prayer, because there was no one to answer prayers, and it was foolishness, foolishness and madness, to imagine they were answered. Now, Tessa wasn't by any means a bigoted girl; she had several brothers and she knew that in the matter of religion and politics every man without exception had some deficiency, but this cut at the very roots of her existence. Because if Dan wasn't the answer to her prayers, what was he? She quietly started a novena for enlightenment, hoping to bring in a verdict in his favour, but so acute was her awareness of Dan's view that there was no enlightenment either, only whatever you wanted yourself to believe, that it ended by convincing her that it was her duty to give him up. He begged and prayed, he cursed and blinded; he assured her he was the most tolerant man in the world and she could believe in any damn nonsense she liked if only she'd marry him, but he had

no chance against a direct revelation from heaven. She got engaged to McGuinness.

I thought it a pity, because she was a really nice girl, and McGuinness was only a poor dish-cloth of a man.

Then I heard through my sister that Dan was behaving very queerly. It seemed he had deserted all his old haunts. He no longer came down the quays on Sundays, refused to eat or talk, and didn't stir out at night until after dark, when he went for long, lonesome walks in the country. People who had met him talked about the way he passed them without looking, or the brief nod he gave them. I felt it was up to me to do something. So one fine spring evening I called. Madge opened the door, and I could see that she had been crying.

"I didn't see Dan this long time, Madge," said I. "How is he?"

"Come in, Michael John," she said, taking out her handkerchief. "He's upstairs. He didn't stir out this last couple of days. Sure, you know the County Council will never stand it."

I followed her up the stairs. Dan was lying on the bed, dressed but without collar and tie, his two hands under his head, apparently studying the ceiling. When I came in he raised his brows with his usual look of blank astonish-

ment as much as to say, "What the hell do you want?"

"Would you like a cup of tea, Dan?" Madge asked.

"If 'tis for me you needn't mind," said Dan with a patient, long-suffering air that made it only too plain what he thought of the suggestion that he could be snatched back from the gates of the grave by a cup of tea.

"Wisha, I'm sure Michael John would like one," said Madge.

"You're not feeling well, I hear?" I said.

"I don't know how you heard anything of the kind," said Dan, rolling his blue eyes to the other side of the room, "because I'm sure I didn't say anything about it."

"Wisha, Michael John," Madge burst out, "did you ever in all your life hear of a grown man carrying on like that on account of a woman?"

"Now," Dan said, raising his voice and turning the flat of his hand in her direction like a partition wall, "I told you I wasn't going to discuss my business with you."

"Why then, indeed, she discussed it enough," said Madge, not realising how every word hurt. "There wasn't much about you that she didn't repeat. How well I could hear it all from a woman in the market."

"Well, go back and discuss it with the woman in the market," he retorted. She gave me a tearful smile and went out.

"You have a grand view," I said, looking down on the quays and the three-master below the bridge in the dusk.

"Yes," he said grudgingly, "but there isn't the traffic there used to be."

"You never wanted to be a sailor?" I asked.

"I was never asked," he replied as if this was a grievance that hadn't occurred to him up to that moment. "No one ever consulted me about what I wanted to be."

"What you need is a holiday," I said.

"How can I take a holiday?" he asked, turning his eyes wonderingly on me as if he had discovered that I, too, had come with a view to persecuting him further.

"If you go on like this you'll take a holiday whether you like it or not," I said, "and it won't be by the seaside. We'll go to Ballybunion for a week."

The eyebrows went up again.

"Parish priests!"

"All right," I said to humour him. "We'll go where there are no parish priests, even if we have to cross the channel for it."

"I'd like to see London again," he admitted. "I wasn't there for ten years."

The idea of that almost got him into good humour, and when I was leaving he put on a collar and tie and walked home with me. I could see that Madge was well-pleased with the result of my intervention, and I wasn't altogether dissatisfied myself.

But the pleasure didn't last long. Next morning I was in the yard when Madge called. She could scarcely speak for terror.

"Michael John, something awful is after happening," she said.

"What?" I asked.

"'Tis Dan. I don't know what to do with him. He tried to commit suicide."

"He what?"

"He did, Michael John. After he came home last night. He turned on the gas-tap before he went to bed. I know because I could still smell it this morning. He's in bed now with a terrible headache." Then she began to cry. "Sure, anyone could have told him you couldn't commit suicide with the gas we have in our house."

"I'll be down this evening," I said. "We'll have to get him away by Saturday without fail."

I spoke with a good deal more confidence than I felt. Suicide is a thing our class have no experience of because a man's family or friends would never let him go so far. It was only with a freak of nature like Dan that the thing be-

came possible at all, and, knowing the man's obstinacy, I wasn't sure but that he might try the same thing again. I didn't know what was the best thing to do. I bought a bottle of whiskey and a few lively gramophone records to bring him, because whenever I feel like committing suicide myself, I usually go out and buy myself whatever takes my fancy. After such a tribute of respect to myself, I never feel so inclined to deprive the community of my services.

He was sitting in the front room when I went in, still without his collar and tie, and he barely lifted his head to salute me. With the dusk coming down on the river outside, the man seemed so lonesome, so shut away in his own doubt and gloom, that my heart bled for him.

"Well," I said, trying to make my voice sound as cheerful and out-of-doors as possible, "I got leave from Saturday if you're ready to start."

"I don't know that I'll be able," he replied in a dead voice, as though the words were merely a momentary interruption of the train of thought that went on in his own head.

"You'll have to," I said. "You can't go on like this much longer."

"I wasn't thinking of going on much longer," he answered.

"Why?" I said, raising my voice and trying to make a joke of it. "You weren't thinking of chucking yourself in the river or anything?"

"I suppose a man might as well do that as something else."

"Ah, look here, Dan," I said, opening the bottle of whiskey, "we all feel like that at times, and it's only a mug's game. In a week's time you'll only be laughing at it."

"Of course, if you're not there in a week's time, you won't have an opportunity of laughing at it," he said, positive even in despair.

"That's why it's a mug's game," I said, filling him out a stiff one. "Doing something permanent about something temporary is always a mug's game, like burning the house to get rid of a leak in the roof."

"Temporary?" he said, raising his brows at me and becoming more like himself. "Is old age a temporary state?"

"Old age?" I said. "Merciful God, how old are you? Thirty-five?"

"Thirty-eight," he said in the tone of some old paralytic telling you he's eighty-three. "And what has a man of thirty-eight to look forward to in this country, Mr. Dunphy?"

"Being thirty-nine," said I.

"It's hardly likely to be much pleasanter than being thirty-



eight. And that, let me tell you is no sinecure."

I took my whiskey and sat opposite him, while he still continued to look at me moodily, a big powerful red-faced man, his hands over the arms of his chair, his head lowered, his eyebrows raised, his blue, smouldering eyes in ambush beneath them.

"The trouble with you, Dan," I said, "is that you're under two delusions. One is that everyone except yourself is having a lovely time; the other is that when you're dead your troubles are at an end."

That roused him.

"That's not an illusion," he said, raising his voice. "That's a scientific fact."

"Fact, my nanny!" I said. "How could it be a fact?"

"'Tis a fact that anyone can see with his own two eyes."

"Well, I can't see it for one," I said.

"You can see it, but you don't want to see it," he said, tossing his big head at me. "It doesn't suit you to see it. You're like all the other gentlemen who pretend they can't see it. My God," he said, beginning to explode on me, "the vanity and conceit of people, imagining that their own miserable little personality is too valuable to be wiped out! But it is wiped out, just the same."

Then I began to get angry too.

Forgetting the fellow was a sick man, I wanted to take it out of him for his unmannerly arrogance and complacency.

"And who the hell are you?" I said. "Who told you you were alive in the first place?"

"Who told me?" he asked, a bit shaken. "No one told me. I am alive. If I didn't know that I wouldn't know anything."

"And who the blazes said you do know anything?" I shouted. "As long as you can't tell me who you really are, or what you're doing in this room at this moment, you have no right to tell me in that impudent tone that when you die there's no more about you."

He thought about that for a moment. I fancy it had never occurred to him in his life before that a man with his strong character mightn't be as real as he thought himself, and that he didn't quite know how to answer it.

"I admit there are some things you can't explain yet," he said grudgingly.

"Nor never will be able to explain," said I.

"Everything can be explained," he said, getting indignant again.

"Not things that are deliberately intended not to be explained. There are things we don't know, because if we knew

them, whatever the answer was, we couldn't go on living."

"Plenty of people think they know them."

"They have faith," said I. "But faith, without doubt, can't exist."

"They have more than faith, Mr. Dunphy," he said saucily. "They have actual knowledge, according to themselves."

"They pretend to have, but they know as little about it as I do. But you and they go on as if you had special information. Doubt is the first principle of existence, and you and they go round trying to destroy it. But your own lives prove the opposite. If you really knew what you pretend to know, you wouldn't be planning to go to England on Saturday."

"I'm not so sure that I'm going to England on Saturday," he said with sudden despondency, all his load of troubles coming back to his mind.

But the argument did him good. It did me good as well. It was the first time I had stood up to him in an argument and if I didn't exactly floor him, I did at least hold my own. I continued the treatment with the records; Madge came in to listen, and it was quite like old times. He came to the door to see me off. It was a lovely starlit night, and he leaned against the jamb of the door,

talking and listening to the voices of girls and sailors from away down the river.

But next morning I was only in to work when a couple of the men came up to tell me about the body that had been fished out of the river a quarter of an hour before. I didn't need anyone to tell me whose it was. I knew my confounded complacency had put me astray again.

"Below the bridge was this, Jack?" I asked.

"Yes, Mr. Dunphy. Why?"

"I'm the man that's responsible, Jack," I said. "Tell the boss I probably won't be back this morning."

I rushed off down the quays. They were very quiet, and the church and the trees reflected in the water, it was so still. I was blaming myself terribly for the whole thing, for not realising that a man as headstrong as that would never be diverted from anything he made up his mind to by arguments. When I reached the bridge I saw plainly that it was all as Jack Delea had described it; the knot of women outside the door, and the still undried trail from the quayside to the hall door.

Madge opened the door, and at once she put her finger to her lips. Surprised not to see her looking more concerned, I tiptoed in the hall and up the stairs after

her. They were wet too, and there was a shocking smell of gas. She opened the door of Dan's bedroom, but he wasn't there. The window was wide open; the bed had not been slept in; there was a teachest in the middle of the floor.

"What did they do with him, Madge?" I whispered, wondering if he had been removed to the morgue.

"Dan?" — she said in surprise. "Oh, he's downstairs, at his breakfast."

"You mean he's all right?"

"It was the mercy of God that the sailor saw him," she said, her eyes shining. "I didn't want you to say anything till you knew what happened."

"But what did happen?" I asked, with an enormous feeling of relief that there wouldn't be any inquest.

"Don't you see?" she said, pointing to the teachest. "He had a length of tubing running through this and a tap at the end."

She lifted the teachest which had a hole drilled in the side of it for the tubing to go through. Beneath it was a pillow and a rug.

"What in hell is that for?" I asked.

"He bought the tubing and the tap so that he could turn on the gas when he was inside the tea-

chest," said Madge with a smile at the man's innocence. "The notion of him being kept down by a teachest, that two men couldn't control when he had the pneumonia. He must have been lifting it off him the whole time. You can see where he got sick through the window."

"And after all that to throw himself into the river!" I said, marvelling at the pertinacity of the man.

"Ah, that was afterwards, Michael John," said Madge. "Then he saw a great light."

"A great what?"

"A great light. He saw life was good."

"He saw a lot," said I.

"He said he saw everything quite plain at last. So to put temptation away from him he took the tube and the tap to throw them in the river. It was while he was doing that that he tripped over the rope."

"I see," said I. "He saw the light, but he didn't see the rope. I hope you don't take that nonsense seriously."

"Oh, I do, Michael John," she said, beginning to cry. "I'm sure 'tis the answer to my prayers. Whatever you do, you mustn't upset him now. He's the best brother in the world only for all those misfortunate books he reads. 'Tis them I'd like to throw in the river."

And she gave a heart-scalded look at the shelf of books by Dan's bed.

I went downstairs in a sort of stupor, and there in the kitchen in his best suit with a collar and tie on was Dan, eating his breakfast and reading the paper at the same time.

"Hullo," he said, quite friendly.

"Oughtn't you to be damn well ashamed of yourself?" I said, losing all control of myself.

"Ashamed of myself?" he asked, raising his brows and getting on his usual high horse. "What would I be ashamed of? I suppose an accident can happen to anyone?"

"Accident?" I said. "Wasn't I sitting in the front room with you last night, trying to keep you away from any more accidents?"

What sort of way is this to treat your unfortunate sister that has her heart broken trying to look after you in your kimeens?"

Suddenly a strange look came into his face. He bowed his head and nodded.

"I admit that," he said meekly. "I admit I was headstrong."

"Headstrong," I said, refusing to be curbed, "and conceited, and thinking you were the only one in the world that was honest."

"I know, I know," he said, and it was only then it struck me that for the first time in his life he had agreed with me. It was an accident all right.

Of course, Madge wouldn't agree with that. He's a reformed character now. And the funny thing is, he'll run through a keyhole to avoid me. He says I'm a man without any proper faith.

*Frank O'Connor, one of Ireland's finest short story writers, spent a little time in jail during the Irish Revolution. He is a linguist, librarian, and a former director of the Abbey Theatre. He never could see eye to eye with the school people, so he educated himself.*



## ***Everybody's Old Man***

ALMOST EVERYONE writing in America today owes something to Ernest Hemingway. In his early days, he did a thorough housecleaning job on the language and tossed out everything that was not absolutely essential. He clearly demonstrated that simplicity and clarity could accomplish just about anything, and that in itself was roughly equivalent to the discovery of nuclear fission. With this knowledge, untold hundreds of writers have since been able to sit down to their writing machines and turn out untold numbers of books, and reap huge amounts of money.

But Hemingway also taught another very important thing — that it is indeed a marvelous thing that people can hear, see, smell, taste, sense, and feel. He revived the body, you might say, brought it out of its mausoleum of numbness. He made a genera-

tion or two aware of the taste of whiskey, cold water, the feel of iron on the fingers, the smell of wind, the colors and forms of objects, the sound of footsteps, the presence of fear in a room. Life could be very exciting if you made use of all your senses — if, in other words, you allowed your naturalness to come forth.

And, to wind up the list, Hemingway popularized the exquisite pleasures of the physical act well done. The trout fisherman, for example, who has mastered his fishing technique has gained control over a certain area of life, brought order out of chaos. And until he has mastered the art, he does not know what its pleasures are all about. Carried further, Hemingway's concept implied that "experience" is accomplishment, and from this point on you became a stylist. The trouble was he stopped at this point.

It is his obsession with style — a peculiarly American obsession, by the way — that was the making of him, and eventually helped break him. Starting out with the first-rate, jewel-like miniature stories of *In Our Time*, and ending up with the farce *Across the River and into the Trees*. On a third and fourth reading of Hemingway, you begin to sense something very disturbing about that superb controlled lucidity, that careful rightness. Then it hits you. You realize that the style masks a real fear, an immediate and constant worry that all hell is just around the corner.

His fine style is airtight to prevent anything from really happening. (A friend of mine once said that he felt the whole of *A Farewell to Arms* was written in a vacuum.) He used style as a kind of ten-foot pole with which he forced reality to keep its distance. In a way, this was all right when he was dealing with the limited, lyrical experiences of a boy, and the limited experiences of people living outdoors. But it proved to be totally inadequate when he began dealing with the complex thoughts and actions of adults who live indoors as well as outdoors. The style was a miniaturist point of view handling miniature things.

Throughout the years he held onto this style, this point of view,

in spite of the fact that life was getting increasingly more subtle and complex and hard to handle. He refused to adapt his style to a changing world. He has finally become so removed from what is really going on, so preoccupied with preserving himself and his miniature ways, that in his last novel it is clear something resembling schizophrenia has set in.

That *Across the River and into the Trees* was actually written and published, by reputable people on both sides, is little short of amazing. It reads as though Hemingway got rather drunk and then talked the whole thing into a tape recorder, either for laughs or just to show off. It has none of the excitement of writing, none of the necessary tensions that make writing more difficult and, in remembrance, more enjoyable than conversation.

An aging American army officer makes idiot love conversation with a beautiful young Italian countess and, when she is not around, with her portrait; he blasts away at a few ducks, and that's about all it is. You become embarrassed and then ashamed as you read through its mounting absurdness. It is as though you watched your own father get drunker and drunker in public, blowing his mouth off, and then pass out. If he had to do it, you wish he had done it at home,

where only the family would know about it.

All this is very sad. Sad because American writers — and just plain readers — have lost a hero, and that is something Americans, writers and other kinds of citizens, find especially hard to take. For we are a nation of hero worshippers. And it is also sad, in a more important way, because it shows once again that the American writer doesn't last long. He doesn't stay around and mature and produce better and better stuff, as the European men of letters seem to do. The American develops early and peters out early.

This is the real tragedy. Fitzgerald, Anderson, Hemingway, Steinbeck, O'Hara, Stephen Crane, Dos Passos — they all expired in their middle years. This creative demise haunts American writers. They suspect that there is some fatal virus in the American air which they are all prey to, which there is no getting away from. Undoubtedly there are many reasons why Americans burn themselves out early. One explanation, I think, is that we still regard ourselves with the same ferocious fatalism that the frontiersman rationalized his precarious life with. We don't expect to live long, and so we don't. The hazards in this country are too great. It is almost as though

we are so convinced of it that we have to dedicate ourselves to seeing that it actually does happen.

Another reason is that the serious writer here still does not regard himself as an essential part of society (however he may try to camouflage this feeling), and he does not think anybody else regards him this way either.

This produces an odd point of view. It makes the writer suspect that he is some sort of bandit, living on the criminal fringe of the city. Every time he manages to make some money on his work, he has the highly uneasy feeling — and thrill — that he has just gotten away with something, almost as if he had pulled a job with a .45 automatic. He knows this sort of life can't last. You have to get caught sometime. And finally you catch yourself, and that is that.

Hemingway was heroic to many, many writers because he seemed to have triumphed in his battle with society. Usually writers' fantasies about themselves and the way they want to live remain hidden in the caves of their psyche. But not Hemingway's. He labored over a mythology about himself and then forced it down society's throat, and society took it. It conspired with him, not against him. He was almost a movie in himself.



The European writer, on the other hand, feels that he is a traditionally accepted member of society and is rated rather highly by his neighbors. So he can relax and go on about the business of maturing, slowly but surely. At seventy he is still writing books, and they are usually better, more integrated and wiser, than those he produced as a boy of thirty or so.

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In examining the career of Hemingway, the young American writer is faced with the problem of re-evaluating "toughness" and "virility." What exactly do these words mean? Hemingway reduced them to their primitive kinetic meaning. Toughness was the capacity for absorbing a lot of physical punishment and not griping about it. Like the Indians, who are some of his favorite people. Virility was almost nothing more than having successful sex, from the man's point of view, not the woman's. These simple concepts may have been usable at another time, in another, simpler world, but they won't work now.

As any intelligent, self-examining person today knows, you don't have to be very much

of anything to suffer a certain amount of pain. That's kid stuff. Today the only kind of toughness that means anything is the ability to deal with the responsibilities of the adult world and try for a full, mature life, and not go crazy or run away. This takes real guts.

Virility, or masculinity, is infinitely more than just being effective in fornication. The man who tries continually to prove his manliness this way is scared silly that he doesn't have it, and he is probably right. Being able to treat a woman with respect and consideration, with full understanding of her different needs and wants, this is the kind of virility that makes human relations rewarding. The other kind, the obsessive kind, makes it barren and frightening.

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Note: Devotees of George Jean Nathan — and anybody else interested in the theatre — will be pleased to learn of the publication of his seventh Theatre Book of the Year, covering the plays of 1949 and '50. Mr. Nathan's coverage is as lively and perceptive as ever.

— CHANDLER BROSSARD

# TO EUROPE for \$100

by John Tebbel

A PLAN TO MAKE oceanic travel cheap, to enable Americans to see Europe comfortably within the limits of a three-week vacation and a \$400 budget — such a plan is now being considered by the Federal Maritime Board. The project envisions low-cost, mass travel between the United States and Europe. At the same time it provides a means for emergency reinforcement of Europe's armies on a scale now unknown.

The aquatic vehicle designed to make all this possible is a super "cabin" liner, 25 per cent longer than the Cunard Line's two Queens, *Mary* and *Elizabeth*. It will be capable of speeding ten thousand civilian passengers or thirty thousand troops across the Atlantic in less than four days, at a civilian fare of only \$100 one way.

If the Federal board approves the plans for this ship, two of them will be built at once, and these streamlined Super Chiefs of the North Atlantic will soon bring private-bath, air-condi-

tioned, classless accommodations for ocean travel within the reach of millions of Americans. They will also add a convincing weapon to the nation's cold war arsenal.

In concrete terms, the proposal is that the government, along with an operating firm, Liberty Liners, Inc., construct the ships at a cost of \$200,000,000, of which \$120,000,000 will be supplied by the government as a defense and construction-differential subsidy, and the remaining \$80,000,000 will be either supplied or assumed by the operators. Then, without operational subsidy, the ships will be operated as high-speed, low-cost civilian carriers while they are kept ready for immediate conversion to war purposes.

At the insistence of the Department of Defense, the exact characteristics of the proposed ships must remain secret, but here are the approximate specifications. They are planned to be about 1250 feet long (the Queen Mary is 984

feet), with a beam about 144 feet, as compared with the Queens' 108 feet. Their draft will be about thirty-seven feet, with a displacement of more than 105,000 tons.

In calm weather the Queens travel at about twenty-eight knots and make the Atlantic crossing from lightship to lightship in a little less than five days. The commercial speed of the proposed ships is in excess of thirty-four knots, and their power for military purposes approaches an unprecedented 400,000 shaft-horsepower. In an emergency, they could run the North Atlantic course in slightly more than three days, with each ship carrying two infantry divisions and two hundred ground-support airplanes. In commercial service the ships could maintain four-day, dock-to-dock schedules, and their length would make them less subject to weather delays than are the Queens, because they would be more stable in heavy weather.

During the second World War the United States paid Great Britain about \$160,000,000 for transporting our troops on the Queens; their speed enabled them to operate without escort in relative safety from submarine attack. The speed of the proposed new ships would assure them the same relative safety from the newer, faster submarines.

They are designed to carry their

own aerial protection against either air or submarine attack. The weather deck, with funnels telescoping and ventilators collapsing, is automatically convertible *at sea* into an unobstructed flight deck eight hundred feet long and 140 feet wide. The top deck, designed for recreation in peacetime, is convertible into a hangar with shops, and the decks would be strong enough to handle rocket-firing fighters.

The ships would have eleven decks above the water line. On each ship there would be about five thousand public cabins, each ten feet by eleven, each with private bath five feet square, each with two standard twin beds. The entire ship would be fireproof, completely enclosed and air-conditioned. Space would be saved by eliminating deluxe suites and class divisions. It would be "run of the ship" for everybody, with cafeteria style food service available at popular prices. Or the traveler could bring his own sandwiches. The emphasis would be on comfort, speed and economy, instead of on luxury and class distinction.

Operating estimates indicate that if the ships ran only at half-capacity during a year — that is, five thousand passengers per crossing — they would be financially successful with a one-way fare of \$100. If they carried an average

of 7500 passengers per crossing, the fare could be cut to \$62.50.

With weekly sailings at capacity, the two ships could transport, round trip, about 520,000 passengers a year. During the Holy Year of 1950 only four hundred thousand Americans will have been able to visit Europe, utilizing all means of sea and air travel. Thus the two ships could carry more passengers than all present means combined. Next year, however, about 720,000 Americans are expected to seek accommodations to Europe. If and when the low-cost ships are made available, the demand is expected to approach two million a year.

Models of the two ships show that in peacetime appearance they are longer, racier *Queen Elizabeths*. The wartime model looks like a many-decked aircraft carrier without the "island." In either form they are convincing as time-savers when one considers that it took several months to convert the *Queens* for war service and six months to reconvert them for civilian service.

These are truly dual purpose ships, in almost every respect. Electronic equipment needed in wartime, for instance, would be built into the ships and maintained in peacetime, even though it was not used. There would be no luxurious carpets or priceless

tapestries to remove; no salons to be filled with sardine-like bunks. Thirty thousand troops would simply move aboard. The aircraft would land on the flight deck. The gunners would man their guns. And the ships could move out with thirty thousand men sleeping eight-hour shifts in beds — not with sixteen thousand men shifting in hammocks and bunks as they did on the *Queens* during the last war.

Even the lifeboats are designed for dual purpose. They are big power boats, carried on the main deck, with an entirely new, safer, and faster launching system. They are either landing craft which can be used as lifeboats, or lifeboats which can be used as landing craft.

Proponents of the ships argue that they would be an immediate advantage to the whole Atlantic community by implementing the common desire for more travel between the United States and Europe. Stalin teaches Europeans to hate America. We invite Europeans to come and see us, know us, and witness the benefits of democracy at first-hand. And Americans visiting Europe bring the precious dollars which Europeans can use, in turn, to buy American wheat and tobacco and cotton.

But travel between the continents is now relatively slow and expensive. Surface travel in rea-

sonable comfort from St. Louis, Missouri, to Paris takes from eight to twelve days and costs at least four hundred dollars. Why not, instead, load a Pennsylvania Railroad coach streamliner in St. Louis, let the train run non-stop to shipside, transfer the passengers directly to their quarters, make the run to Le Havre in three-and-a-half days, and transfer to a Paris train, so that the trip takes five days and costs only \$150?

Why not, in fact, bring European travel within the limits of a three-week vacation and a four-hundred-dollar budget? Then millions instead of thousands can travel the Atlantic. European students and teachers can see the Statue of Liberty, the Tennessee Valley, and the Rockies. American students, teachers, farmers, people of ordinary means can see the Alps and the Coliseum and the Tuileries, and our great conventions can be held as readily in London, Paris, or Rome as in Miami, Chicago, or San Francisco.

The planners of the proposed ships believe that low-cost, mass, comfortable, high-speed oceanic transportation is now as necessary to the Atlantic community as are subways to New York City. They believe that mass travel can contribute as much to peace and mutual strength as can the Marshall Plan or Voice of America.

Paradoxically, the ships might contribute to peace even in their function as warships. The most anxious question in Europe remains: if the Russians attack, how long will it take the Americans to reinforce us? That our bombers can reach Moscow in a few hours with atomic bombs is an assurance to Europe and a deterrent to Russia. But of concern to both Europeans and Russians is the question of how long it will take for Americans with bazookas to help man the barriers.

If our divisions can travel the Atlantic with express-train speed — if we have two ships which can deliver twelve divisions and two thousand fighter planes within thirty days — then these elemental facts may well become as powerful a deterrent as our strategic bombers, and all of Europe will experience renewed assurance.

These superliners, whose possibilities are plainly so vast, are the dream of an Illinois-born New Yorker, P. W. Chapman, former president of United States Lines.

In 1928, Chapman bought from the government all the American passenger ships on the North Atlantic, including the *Leviathan*. He initiated construction of the *Manhattan* and the *Washington*, and after his retirement he began planning for larger ships and lower fares. The war delayed his plans,

but this year he organized Liberty Liners and began negotiations with the government.

Two vice presidents of Liberty Liners are retired generals. They are Major General Hugh J. Knerr, who was wartime deputy commander of Strategic Air Forces in Europe, and Major General T. B. Wilson, former board chairman of TWA Air Lines, who was wartime transportation chief for both Generals MacArthur and Stilwell.

Under our maritime laws the government now extends a construction-differential subsidy to all approved new shipping. This is to cover the difference between what it costs to build a ship in the United States and what it would cost to build it in Europe. The two proposed liners could be built in Europe for about half

what they would cost in the United States. In addition, the government now extends an operational subsidy to all passenger ships — a subsidy to help pay our higher wages, higher fuel costs, higher general operational expenses.

In their petition, Liberty Liners has applied for the construction subsidy from the Maritime Board and has asked the Department of Defense to pay for the purely “weapon” features of the ships. The petition, however, maintains that no operational subsidy will be necessary, that the ships, even with the low fares, can return a peacetime profit on the eighty-million-dollar private risk.

Whether or not the ships should be built is now a decision for ourselves and our government.

*. . . As the  
Fingersmith  
Said  
to the  
Glue*

by Joseph Fulling Fishman

**Y**' SEE, I BUTTS dis reeler on a stem rattler and boosts the poke from his butch kick with a bolly dog at me mitt. Then I weeds it and gives the leather to Whiskers."

I stared at the sleazy little pickpocket on the other side of my desk, certain that he had no idea what he was talking about. I had just been appointed Inspector of Prisons for the Federal Government, and this was my first experience with criminals.

Whether this Leavenworth inmate was kidding me because he

could see I was green, I didn't know. But I did know that his contempt was obvious when I asked him to translate his argot.

What he had been trying to convey was his cleverness in robbing a drunk on a street car on the town's main thoroughfare, getting the wallet from his hip pocket and dropping it into the nearest mail box — Whiskers being Uncle Sam and that he had performed this amazing feat under the eyes of a nearby policeman.

This was my initiation into the subsequently learned fact that among confirmed criminals — at least those of the lower- and middle-class — slang is the accepted method of verbal and written communication. Often since then I have suspected that many employ this bastardized English because they want to appear tough and wise in their profession. But there is no doubt that their talk is so coded with slang that it is impossible for an uninitiated listener to make any sense at all out of it.

Since that experience with the pickpocket (or "fingersmith," or "digger," or "wire," or "picker," or "fanner," or a score of other slang designations all meaning the same thing). Both in prisons and out, I have talked with a vast horde of criminals, and have sat in as a listener (sometimes unknown to them) while they



gabbed with each other and "split" to the police. Thus I learned to understand much of their tongue.

Charles De Woody, former head of the FBI office in Chicago, once showed me a recording of a conversation between two crooks which gives an excellent idea of how they interlard speech with their own peculiar lingo. De Woody had learned from a stool pigeon that the two were going to meet at the room of one of them. There he had planted a listening device, with a stenographer at the other end of the wire in an adjoining room, taking down everything that was said. Here's the way it started:

"Well, if it isn't the old gulley miner. Still playing the big windows?"

"Not any. I ankled that beeswax. No hum. I'm a big mitt broadman now. Doing the water wagons. Got a good ringer, an A-1 beagle and a swell squawk mat."

"Yeah? I'd be a little afraid of that dilldocking. They tell me those shes are full of glues."

"Plenty of 'em. But that beagle of mine can burn a bogie with his boke."

There was much more of the same, a bewildering cascade of it, some with a more or less faint connotation of the reality, others

so remote that they apparently lacked all relationship. "Gulley miner," for instance. But when you know that a gulley miner is a man who pans for small quantities, or leavings, of gold, the resemblance becomes somewhat plainer. The genial crook was insulting his friend by calling him a small-timer in the criminal field.

"Water wagon" is not too far from ship, nor is "shes" — vessels being of the feminine gender — or "beeswax" from business, or "bessness," as it is frequently called. But no one knows why a "broadman" is a crooked card-player, or why "glues" are detectives. Nor why "burn a bogie with his boke" means he can spot a detective with his nose.

That which immediately followed the above would probably sound even sillier to the uninformed:

"When we pipe it's a hard lay we do a little blister work. Always some John Family or silk moll with bookoo toadskins playing around with a yuk who'll ante to keep the knockdown from the bundleman or headache."

Or, in other words:

"When we find it's inadvisable to start a crooked card game, we do a little blackmailing or extortion work. Always some married man or aristocratic woman with plenty of money playing

around with a boy- or girl-friend who'll pay to keep information about their conduct from going to the husband or wife."

## II

In this always fascinating game of trying to figure out the application or origin of these non-dictionary synonyms, some faint relationship between a few of them and the words from which they sprung is discernible. "Bookoo," for instance, is undoubtedly borrowed from the French "*beaucoup*," meaning much, while "roadskins" is obviously a synonym for "greenbacks," or money. The relationship of "squawk mat" is more distant, but in all probability has to do with a cushion, or protection, for a swindler when his victim complains or squawks.

But what about "hum" for money? "Blister work" for black-mailing? "Yuk" for boy-friend or girl-friend? When, where and how did *they* originate? Or the score of other names by which a card shark is known by his colleagues in the underworld: "pasteboard gee," "keener," "philosopher," "greek," "tosser," "game hog," "pastie," and so on?

Numerous as the synonyms are, however, there are probably two or three times as many for police-

men, stool pigeons and detectives. The latter are refined to characterize those engaged in special types of work, or to label any particular quirk or qualification for which they are noted. Examples: a policeman with a good memory for faces is a "deadeye," an "Eastman" (evidently meaning one with the eye of a kodak), or a "glare glimmer." One who takes bribes is a "percentage bull," a "curbstone nibs," or a "pavement beak."

A curious facet of criminal slang which does not seem to exist in other occupations is that those engaged in one branch of crime may have as much difficulty in understanding the "gab" of those in another as do people engaged in honest pursuits.

Thus our two swindlers would have been just as bewildered as any non-criminal had they been listening to a safecracker telling another about a recent job:

"We had a pretty good bunch of O'Sullivans, a torch man, a mechanic, a jigger and a hard-shell biscuit who'd been with a gopher mob. We crashed with a get-in betty.

"Well, we thought it was a bread-box, but it sure turned out to be a herring. Place bugged from top to bottom. But we finally got to work. And boy, did we work! Tried the dogs first. No go. Must have fooled around the

brain box for an hour, with only shiners to go by, and that ain't any fun. Finally we used a come-on on the brain box. Still no go. Then the can opener, the stems and the sec stick, and the knob-knocker, and finally the damper. That did it."

The two eavesdropping swindlers, like any outsider who had never been "on the gun" (engaged in stealing as a profession), would have had to employ an interpreter to tell them that the following is what their brothers-in-crime were conveying to each other:

"We had a pretty good bunch of safecrackers, a man who uses an acetylene torch, a man who does the heavy work, a man who knows how to rob bank safes and vaults, and an old-time safecracker who'd been with a mob which specialized in burrowing under buildings in which there are safes marked for looting. We obtained entrance by the use of a jimmy.

"Well, we thought it was an easy safe to open, but it sure turned out to be a hard one. Place equipped with burglar alarms from top to bottom. Had to use plenty of wire to cut off alarms. But we finally got to work. And boy, did we work! Tried the tumblers first. No go. Must have fooled around the combination for an hour, and

with only flashlights to go by, and that ain't any fun. Finally we used a tool to pull off the combination. Still no go. Then the huge crowbar to rip the back, or thinner part of the safe. Then the drills and the sectional jimmy and the hammer and finally the dynamite. That did it."

As Deputy Commissioner of Correction of New York City, I once had an amusing experience with this inability of criminals in one field to comprehend the slang of those in another. There had been so much smuggling of narcotics into the Welfare Island Penitentiary that I decided to put in two men as prisoners for thirty days to see if they could obtain information which it was almost impossible to get in any other way.

The men I selected for this purpose assured me they were wise in the ways of the underworld, in addition to being thoroughly conversant with life and language in the "clink." So I ran them through the courts in the regular way — with, of course, the connivance of the magistrate. I had instructed them to hold themselves out as "junkies" (narcotic users). I was sure that, as soon as the word got around that they "used the stuff," and that they were well-heeled to pay for it, those doing the smuggling would seek them out.

That's what I thought. But the pair hadn't been in the institution twenty-four hours before every addict in the place knew they were "steers." Why? Because their supposed fellow dopes looked stunned when the real addicts began to shoot at them words and phrases unapproved by professors of English.

Once convinced that they were phonies, the addicts, of whom there were several score in the institution, had a hilarious time laying it on thick with a bewildering chain of chatter which left my men gasping.

"Want to wise you up," one of the real "oil burners" (addicts) told them during the recreation period in the yard, while a dozen others listened and tried to keep from laughing. "There're all kinds of Dr. Whites in here, witch-hazel men, gongers, goof balls, gold-dusters and dugouts. There ain't a chance for a prod. And there ain't any artillery in the place, and not even a ding-hyen. If you didn't bring a trained nurse with you, you're just sneezed down, and it's piddle and cold turkey for you. You can't work a cartwheel or a bug to get a reader because the butcher's gumptious to all that. So you might as well get yourself set for the steel-and-concrete and

the chuck horrors. I had 'em."

If my men had had a glossary with them, they would have known that their "friend" who was giving them the low-down was informing them that there were all types of addicts in the institution, including heroin users, opium fiends, marijuana habitues, cocaine sniffers, morphine injecters, and a few of the most degraded type. (By the latter he meant those who eat yen-shee; that is, the residue of smoked opium.)

Further, he informed my bewildered pair, while they were in the institution there wasn't the slightest chance for a shot, because there weren't any needles or other such equipment in the place and no opportunity to make home-made ones. If they hadn't managed to conceal some narcotics on their person (bringing a "trained nurse" with them) it was just too bad, since the prison doctor was wise to fake fainting fits designed to get a prescription for a shot or two (a reader). All that remained for them, therefore, was that they would be taken off drugs at once, during the first two weeks of which treatment they would have the familiar horror of food. My two "plants" came back considerably wiser.

*Joseph Fulling Fishman was formerly Deputy Commissioner of Correction of New York City.*

# *We Are Kidding Ourselves In Japan*



by Romney Wheeler

GORO KIMURA, a Japanese book-seller, put it this way: "I'm not a Communist, but I think perhaps you Yanks have made a mistake. Instead of trying to convert us into third-class Americans, why don't you help us to become first-class Asiatics?"

Some of us who have watched the five-year effort to democratize Japan are ready to concede the propriety of Goro's question. The democratization effort has been vigorous and well-meaning enough; its asserted progress has been tolled in the organ tones of MacArthur. But unless we insist on being deluded by our own propaganda, we must admit some doubts as to effectiveness.

According to General MacArthur and his marvelously efficient Public Information Office, we have created a "New Japan." We gave the Japanese a new constitution. We overhauled their

schools. We rewrote their laws and revised their courts. We cracked down on Big Business and gave Labor the green light. We broke up the big estates and forced land reform. We shook up the tax laws and streamlined public service. We supplied know-how and whooped up production. And we did it all with assembly-line speed.

To hear ourselves talk we have been terrific — and hardworking Occupation mimeographs can grind out any number of statistics to make us look even better. But the time has come for us to slow down the mimeographs and make a calm appraisal.

Take Japan's new constitution — we "gave" it to them. The word "gave" is worth nothing. The Japanese themselves didn't demand or even request a constitution. They weren't particularly interested in it, not even the poli-

ticians who had the job of enacting it. A task force in MacArthur's Government Section worked night and day drafting the document. When it was completed the Supreme Commander himself inserted two paragraphs making Japan renounce war forevermore. Then the draft was handed to the Japanese Diet committee which was supposed to be writing the new constitution. The committee was given just forty-eight hours to adopt the draft as its own.

Eventually — with prodding from GHQ — the Japanese Diet enacted this document as the basic law of Japan. It was hailed repeatedly by MacArthur as "the product of enlightened Japanese thought." But when one Japanese asked another what he thought of the new constitution, the waggish reply was always: "I don't know; I don't read English."

Within one year after the surrender in Tokyo Bay, MacArthur proclaimed that the Japanese already had grasped the democratic way of life. A spiritual revolution, he said on September 2, 1946, had "almost overnight torn asunder a theory and practice of life built upon 2000 years of history, tradition and legend."

Said the Supreme Commander with supreme confidence: "This revolution of spirit among the

Japanese people represents no thin veneer to serve the purposes of the present. It represents an unparalleled convulsion in the social history of the world."

Three years later, on September 2, 1949, the general declared: "The basic causes of social unrest throughout Asia have largely been eradicated in Japan by a redesign of the social structure to permit the equalization of individual opportunity and personal liberty."

The general is a matchless orator, let's concede it. Maybe he is a greater orator than Churchill. And there is no denying that he and his eager reformers, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, attacked the Japanese guinea pig with gusto. But while listening to MacArthur speak, one discouraged educator said:

"MacArthur has the gift of looking at problems through the wrong end of a telescope. Any problem can be neatly solved by an order. After that it ceases to exist. A directive has been published, and that's that!"

The only trouble with the general's heroic pronouncements is that the Japanese don't understand them. Democracy in Japan remains an English word, not a way of life, and certainly not a cherished right.

And what troubles the objective American in Japan is this

question: Can democracy be "given" by one people to another? Or can it even be imposed by one people on another?

## II

One of the things that has distinguished our "democratization" program has been a really magnificent ability to work at cross-purposes. Each group of experts has toiled in its own vineyard, oblivious of the effect that its reforms might have on someone else.

When MacArthur's Labor Division approved higher wages for workers, the Industry Division approved bigger subsidies for industry — a cat-chasing-its-tail which contributed substantially to Japan's inflation. When inflation became alarming, we brought in a Detroit banker named Joseph M. Dodge. He was a poor man's Sir Stafford Cripps. His job was to make strength through austerity. He evolved the "Dodge Plan," which meant cutting expenses, balancing the national budget, denying wage increases and prohibiting subsidies. This checked inflation, but without subsidies, steel and other commodities had to increase in price to a point where they could not compete in international markets.

Our labor reforms already had upset the delicate price-cost re-

lationship in Japan. For generations Japan's labor relations had been paternalistic. In return for a worker's loyalty, the boss looked after him for life. He got a raise when he married, and other raises as children were born. He got periodic bonuses and allowances, and finally, when he died, his employer buried him.

Now everything was changed. To offset monopoly-minded Management, we set out to make Labor independent. Before the war labor unions never had a membership of more than 450,000. Within a year after we had occupied Japan, Labor claimed 4,500,000 members, and it now claims around seven million, including 1,500,000 women. We even created a Japanese-style AFL and CIO which feuded with one another. All that has been lacking is a Japanese John L. Lewis.

For a period Labor got whatever it wanted. Wages climbed and so did inflation. But here came the imbalance. Human labor has always been Japan's biggest surplus. Thus it was standard practice for an employer to hire three workers to do the work of one. Under the old system this was no handicap, the wages of three Japanese being still below the cost of one European doing the same type of work.

In 1950, however, it costs perhaps \$120 a month for three



Japanese to produce the same merchandise as one European who was paid \$90. Result: Japanese cameras are being undersold by superior German makes; Japanese watches are quoted higher than Swiss competition; Japanese heavy machinery is undersold by British and Swedish makers.

Aside from economics, the theoretical approach to Japanese labor problems often has been ludicrous. Labor Division decided that Buddhist and Shinto priests were subject to wage-hour legislation and unemployment insurance. When priests were transferred to rituals after having handled temple business, Labor Division ruled that they must be given "dismissal indemnity," like any clerk who had been fired. And when the great Ise Shrine held its customary mid-night services at New Year's, American experts ruled that the wage-hour law prohibited women from working after 10 P.M. Hence female temple dancers couldn't perform their age-old rituals.

The Japanese protested that they had always done it this way. They appealed to MacArthur's Division of Religions and Cultural Resources, which flew to their defense. Finally Labor Division conceded that the dancers could dance — provided they were paid time-and-a-half for overtime gyrations.

In education our planners have had another field day. We have not only purged the schools of militaristic books and teachers, we insisted on reorganizing the whole structure — American style!

Instead of the old plan guaranteeing a child six years of grammar school, we installed the "6-3-3" plan: six years of elementary school, three of junior high, and three of senior high. We broke up the old central administration and made each prefecture responsible for its schools.

Unfortunately, five years after the war, only 30 per cent of Japan's war-damaged schools have been rebuilt. There aren't enough schoolrooms even for grammar schools, yet we have installed a new system demanding one-third more schooling, and the school-age population has been increasing by more than a million a year. Local school administrators are distracted and many of them have petitioned for an end of the reform.

A veteran British educator remarked sadly: "The Occupation has given Japan an educational system she can't afford — unless, that is, you Yanks want to pay for it."

In our efforts to convert the Japanese into Americans we have often overlooked the language barrier. There are many American

ideas which simply can't be expressed in Japanese.

Take the word *majority*. The nearest the Japanese can come to it is a word meaning "many numbers"; it conveys only the idea of plurality.

Or *incidental*. The Japanese translate it as "accidental." And they have no word like *program*, no way to express the idea of an organized plan of action.

Or *debate*, meaning democratic discussion. The Japanese terms invariably convey the idea of struggle. They have no word resembling *initiative*.

The words *accept* and *adopt* have no difference in meaning to the Japanese, nor can they translate *voting* as a means of reaching a decision. Their word *to-hyo* means to "throw paper."

These thought barriers have gone generally unrecognized by the eager American reformers. When we try to tell the Japanese about the American way of life we call it *information*. But the Japanese can translate it only as "propaganda," and they react accordingly.

There has been no end of difficulty rising from the word *recommend*. American officials, trying to be diplomatic, have "recommended" that this or that be done. And they have been pleased at the alacrity with which the Japanese "accept the recommen-

dations." What the Americans have not understood is that for centuries the "recommendations" of higher authority have been equivalent to a direct order in Japan. Thus when a village mayor receives a "recommendation" from MacArthur, the "recommendation" is accepted without question.

It seems never to occur to our career Army men that there is anything puzzling to the Japanese about Western democracy. When the Japanese bow solemnly and declare that they love "demokrassie," our reformers glow with satisfaction.

I recall Col. Julian Dayton. He was commander of the Kanto Region Military Government, later known as Civil Affairs. The Japanese (prudently, behind his back) called him "King of the Kanto."

Colonel Dayton is a sincere and honest administrator. He takes himself seriously, and he took everything the Japanese told him as Gospel truth. He conducted English lessons for his domestic servants for fifteen minutes, morning and evening, seven days a week. He also led them in prayer and hymns. "Just give 'em a chance at Christianity!" he boomed. "They eat it up!"

Late in 1949, when Civil Affairs Teams were being abolished, the colonel made his final swing

around his region. At Nagano he addressed the governors of seven prefectures. He lectured them forcefully about their new constitution. He said they would come to bless it and love it as he blessed and loved the Constitution of the United States of America. He closed in a blaze of rhetoric that would have won the respect of William Jennings Bryan.

The governors — none of them speaking English — listened respectfully. When an interpreter gave them a quick summary, they bowed and exclaimed: "Ah, yes! Is it not so!" Then they presented Colonel Dayton with a scroll expressing humble gratification for his "fatherly advice and counsel."

The colonel was enchanted. In his private railroad car he had the scroll read to him again and again by his interpreter.

"Y' know," he exclaimed happily, "I guess I *am* like a father to those guys!"

### III

General MacArthur will disagree, but as one thoughtful American who watched our five-year effort to convert the Japanese into people like ourselves, I am forced to this conclusion: we have managed to create a maximum of confusion with only a minimum of good. In some ways the Japanese are worse off because of our "reforms."

Our exceedingly efficient Public Health and Welfare Section has succeeded in driving down Japan's death rate from 29.2 per thousand in 1945 to only 10.9 per thousand in 1949. The birthrate, meanwhile, was rising to 32.8. Thus, with our help, Japan's population is now increasing at the rate of 1,800,000 a year. Every morning there are five thousand more Japanese than yesterday.

Yet population — and population control — was strictly "off-limits" to the Occupation. It was a hot potato that was bound to result in one or another line of argument: birth control or emigration. Either or both were politically embarrassing.

This reluctance on our part to come to grips with the population problem seems almost criminal. How can we say that we have helped Japan when Japan is less self-sufficient today than she has ever been?

Economically we have solved none of the basic problems of Japan: our reforms have only intensified the urgency of these problems. We have succeeded in raising Japan's requirements without raising her ability to satisfy them.

We gave the Japanese a fine new system of health insurance. The system is already ridden by hopeless debt.

We gave Japan land reform, and

left the new peasant-landowners dependent for crop-loans on new farm co-operatives. But most of the co-ops have now gone broke, and the commercial banks are refusing to lend money.

We raised Japan's production for export with no idea of where she'd sell what she produced. In consequence, her warehouses are now loaded with goods which can't be moved, unless we allow trade with Red China.

(As an example of Occupation economics, consider the order issued in February 1950 by Maj. Gen. William F. Marquat, head of MacArthur's Economic and Scientific Section. He directed that plans be "implemented" [a favorite Army term] to increase Japan's tourist business to \$50,000,000 in 1950-51. When flabbergasted subordinates reminded him that this was *five times* the amount spent by all non-Occupation foreigners, including traders, since Japan's surrender, the astronomic goal was hastily abandoned.)

Some of the cultural advice we have given the Japanese has been fantastic. One general release to Japanese magazines included: "Suggestions for Cooking Turkey," "Homemade Mixes for Biscuits," and "The Most Plentiful Foods on U. S. Markets in March."

In too many sad cases we have been the well-meaning guy stand-

ing behind the bakery window holding out cakes to a hungry child — a child who has no money, or prospect of money, to buy them.

The Japanese have met some of our good offers with quiet but effective resistance. The distribution of Bibles is a case in point. More than ten million Bibles have been distributed in a country where fewer than three hundred thousand are of the Christian faith. I saw a young Japanese pause on the street one day and pull a pocket Bible from his coat. But he didn't read. Instead, he carefully tore out a page and rolled a cigarette.

Why? Well, he explained, cigarette paper cost twenty yen for one hundred sheets. Bibles were being sold for fifty yen, and had five hundred pages. Besides, he smiled, Bible paper burned better.

Most of the ten million Bibles we have sent to Japan have, quite literally, gone up in smoke.

#### IV

Is there any hope that our efforts may not prove to have been in vain? Yes, there is some, but I have an idea that it lies in our placing, more and more, the destiny of Japan in Japanese hands. We have turned Japan in a new direction, and if we will now

think more in terms of what Japan *needs*, and less in terms of what *we* want, then something better may result.

The Japanese are the natural leaders of Asia; they are easily the most valuable people in Asia. Consequently we should interest the Japanese in exerting non-Communist Asiatic leadership upon other Asiatics. We must think in terms of what Japan can afford rather than in terms of what our reformers think she ought to have.

Up to this moment we have insisted on giving Japan a jazzed-up

democracy which is as unsuited to her habitat as it is to her purse, and thus, unwittingly, we have risked delivering a broken and disillusioned Japan into the hands of the Communists.

If we can now get down to the good earth of reality; if we can free Japan from much foolish bureaucratic "planning"; if we can enlist able and alert Japanese minds — then perhaps we can find some practical, applicable solutions to the problem of eighty-four million people living on a few tiny islands, with their population bulging every day.

*Romney Wheeler has been a newspaper man for several years. For about a year and a half he was a member of General MacArthur's civilian staff in Tokyo.*



## ***Coaxial Blues***

AT HIS TELEVISION debut the noted cynic and knife-thrower, Fred Allen, was made up beyond recognition but he delivered some observations which left no doubt of his identity. Allen is a man who hates radio because it made him a fortune and then turned around and bit him. Wary now and deeply suspicious of making any more money at so great a cost, Allen bit television at his first opportunity.

Puppets, he predicted, will take over television. He gave people six more months. The audience thought this was funny, but it is safe to say that the network executives and the producers and the sponsors, and in general everyone behind the cameras could manage nothing better than a grimace. For people continue to be television's number

one problem, whether they are cluttering up the theatres and studios or whether they sit in ominous silence at the other end of the high-frequency waves, in the hitherto unpenetrated privacy of their homes.

The wet nurses who suckle this bawling infant industry remember what happened to radio listeners when the big money finally took over. Radio staggered and fell under the blows of its innumerable sponsors until it lay helpless and weary in a morass of quiz shows and giveaways.

Deplorable as this may have been to the listeners, no one questioned radio's power as an advertising medium, and television, when it came, opened the staggering prospect of making that medium visual and animated, thus potentially placing

its selling power second only to a real salesman face to face with a live prospect.

That was why advertisers were (and are) willing to expend exorbitant amounts of cash for television. They were willing to spend much with little return for a while, consolidating their ground floor position, until the industry grew enough to make it worth while, after which the tree could be shaken every hour on the hour and fresh money would float to earth. They thought of television, in brief, as visual radio.

At the moment there seems to be something wrong. There are more than thirty million viewers supposedly hanging on every flickering image, the theatres and studios are full of people who behave just like radio studio audiences — but among the thirty million at home there appear to be a growing number of people who view many of the sponsors' offerings with disdain. And unlike radio listeners, who left the set on while they talked, did the dishes, or even read, meanwhile letting the advertising message seep in by repetition and osmosis, televiewers, or "videots," as their disparagers call them, switch to another channel and sometimes simply turn the damn thing off.

The difference lies in the rela-

tionship between television and its audience, which is something special. First, it is a demanding medium, requiring full attention or none. Then an intimacy is established between the screen and the viewer, like the invisible bond between audience and actors in the theatre, and in another way, at the movies. This type of relationship is well enough understood, but the producers and vice-presidents are slowly beginning to grasp the fact that a man at home and a man in a theatre, or in a studio audience, are not at all the same citizen.

This has already been a difficult and complicating factor in the production of television plays. The kind of light, boy-and-girl comedy which is a staple of Hollywood creation seldom comes off when it is seen on a picture tube. It merely looks as silly as it really is. Love does no better. The nuzzling and sighing which unfailingly snares the projected libidos of movie patrons is only embarrassing in the family living room. And the franker lovemaking of the theatre is, of course, denied to the children of the Federal Communications Commission.

On the other hand, the television audience tolerates and enjoys violence as much as it does at the movies, and it seems to approve of unrelieved tragedy.



Unfortunately, all this has left television drama split haplessly into tales of crime and horror, glorified soap operas, and adaptations of the politer kind of Broadway successes.

It may be significant that the acknowledged two best shows in television play without studio audiences, and are designed exclusively for the home viewer. These shows, "Garroway At Large" and "Kukla, Fran and Ollie," are easily the freshest and most distinctive productions on the coaxial cable.

Aside from the enormous talent of the people and puppets who produce and act in them, the success of these shows rises from their distinctively television character. They could not be duplicated in any other medium.

Garroway's show is distinguished by its technical artistry, the use of the camera as an incredibly flexible extension of the home viewer's own vision, so that it seems to be observing with human curiosity and interest. Like so many other shows, Garroway's has comedians, dancers and singers, but unlike the others, it is pitched in a low key. The mood is intimate. While the viewer's attention is engaged by the roving, *voyeur* cameras, his ears are not assaulted by the heavy brass of pit orchestras, the sharp Broadway accents of thea-

tre comedians, nor the raucous responses of a studio audience. Even the commercials are delivered without benefit of chants and exhortations.

The charm of Burr Tillstrom's "Kukla" show is different but just as distinctive. There the camera is relatively static and the emphasis is on illusion. The fact that its adult audience outnumbers the children lifts it at once from the Howdy Doody class. Its appeal is that of "Alice In Wonderland," of "Peter Pan" and other classic fantasy. It is the kind of illusion that could not be done successfully in any other medium; it belongs to television.

Both these shows were sustaining for some time, and it was fashionable in the business to say that it was all very well for them to win awards and acclaim for their good taste and artistry, but the broadcasters still had to pay the bills. It wasn't possible, however, to overlook the home viewers who responded to the shows. Consequently both have acquired well-heeled sponsors who have been sensible enough to leave the character of the shows alone. Thus it can no longer be argued that quality is unprofitable.

Is the answer, then, to fulfill Allen's acid prophecy by producing more puppets? God, one

hopes, will forbid. Should the big production shows be shelved, and only intimate entertainment be provided? Well, no. Television, after all, is a mass media, and Garroway and Tillstrom's puppets are not mass entertainment. Is the studio audience to be blamed? The pro argument here insists that entertainers, especially comedians, need the studio audience to project their work successfully. The con argument asserts that the show is played principally for the visible audience, whose reaction can be heard and measured, while the man at home is left holding his picture tube.

While the sponsors and the networks have been threshing around in this dilemma, making more noise than sense, the bulk of the fat budgets has gone into pure formula shows, aside from drama. These are simply photographed Broadway revues, staged in regular theatres — the networks are slowly eating into New York's already limited supply of stage space — and are put together on conventional lines. The pattern was established early by the phenomenal success of the Milton Berle show, and doubtless other advertisers, encouraged by an 80 per cent audience identification of the sponsor's product, determined to follow a familiar and proven way.

This kind of show dazzles the video owner for a while. He gapes at the parade of celebrities who appear as guest stars, watches with fascination the glittering production numbers, and enjoys the sexy views of showgirl legs and breasts, where he and the cameras can enjoy looking through keyholes together, a pleasure denied to him by radio.

But even the most ardent devotee of song-and-dance, who will always buy a ticket to a Cole Porter musical instead of to "Death Of A Salesman," if he has a choice, breaks down under the nightly impact of this pattern, repeated endlessly and with few variations. Moreover, the vaudeville acts and the comedians themselves bob up on one show after another, until some of them acquire a dreadful familiarity.

The pattern has recently begun to reach the point of diminishing returns. In search of new ways to stun its audiences, NBC converted the Center Theatre, a place only slightly less cavernous than the neighboring Radio City Music Hall, into a television house. On its enormous stage, and before more studio viewers than ever before witnessed such a phenomenon, several famous names in show business have already died dismally. Ed Wynn expired there in his first show.

He had been funny only a few months before, even on kinescope recording, when he performed a silent movie pantomime with Buster Keaton on a very small stage indeed. Similarly, Frank Sinatra, who had shown surprising promise of being a first-rate television personality when he appeared as a guest star, was lost with his entire cast in the Center's vast reaches, on his own show.

All over New York, on a dozen other stages, these deaths are being repeated, at greater and greater expense, for the benefit of more and more viewers as the coaxial cable insinuates its way across the continent.

There may be an answer, though. It may be possible to keep the studio audience, to produce big flashy entertainment, and still make a show that will speak in understandable terms to the videot in his living room. The answer may have appeared on the autumn night this year when Eddie Cantor presented his second television effort. So far Cantor appears to be almost the only one of the great entertainers of the past recently projected into the new medium who has been able to adapt himself to it, and even bring something new to the strange art.

Cantor's show had a large and demonstrative studio audience,

but he appeared to subordinate it deliberately to the viewer at home. The means used were, like Garroway's, of a technical nature. The cameras kept the show fluid, as in a movie, an episode or a song or a comedy routine merging smoothly, one with the other, in a style far removed from the pattern of a Berle-type show, with its set acts linked together by the comedian-master-of-ceremonies. The camera — i.e., the viewer himself — was the link between the show's separate parts.

In the parts themselves, Cantor used the cameras to give his viewers at home an illusion that quite possibly was not shared by the studio audience. He achieved this with a liberal use of close-ups, and with sets which would have been completely inadequate by conventional staging standards.

That may be it: not to banish the studio audience, but to ignore it, in a sense; to give the home viewer a feeling of intimate identification with what he sees by lending him the camera's eyes in a way that only the movies do now — always remembering that the living room is a place where people live, not a theatre without popcorn.

Apparently, then, television is at least making a groping gesture toward solving its first

problem — what to do with people. These learning gestures are horribly expensive but essential if the medium is not to succumb to the paralysis induced by the idea that its problems are basically like those of radio and such established media.

It has other major problems. One is the nearly complete lack of serious music on its program schedules, all the more deplorable because the networks are slowly eliminating this particular kind of culture from radio. Another is the handling of sports events, which started with a hoopla that scared the pants off promoters and led them to pre-

dict the eventual elimination of flesh-and-blood spectators at sporting events. Now it is clear that these alarms were premature, that there are, in fact, several unique restrictions on the ability of television to cover sports in the exclusive manner originally visualized.

Then there is the problem of how to produce news broadcasts, and a deskful of other dilemmas, but they need not be considered in these pages at the moment. For now it is enough to report that television is showing signs of learning to distinguish people from videots.

——— JOHN TEBBEL

EVERYBODY AGREES that our plight in the world is bad, but nobody names the true cause. "Disloyalty in the State Department," "Stalin double-crossed us," "Roosevelt died," "Truman is small town," "Acheson is stubborn," "The Republicans were ignored," "We can't sup-

ment, no one in executive authority in this country has taken the trouble to study its dogmas, decrees, plans, strategies, and find out, thoroughly and astutely, what it is and how it works.

On February 11, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt said to a bunch of communist-minded young men

## CAN TRUMAN BE EDUCATED?

by Max Eastman

port the whole world." It might clear the air, and open at least a clean look into the future, if we acknowledged that *the simple and sole cause of our plight is ignorance*. Ignorance in the control and leadership of United States policy from top to bottom.

We are up against a complex, mystical, pseudo-scientific religion and a fanatically impassioned, armed crusade called Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism. It differs from everything else in history — most of all from everything American. It has created a crisis that may well be the supreme one in the life of mankind. And yet, up to the present mo-

and maidens on the White House lawn: "The Soviet Union, as everyone knows who has the courage to face fact, is a dictatorship as absolute as any dictatorship in the world." That was bold, true and supremely important. It was an example of what John Gunther calls Roosevelt's "knowledgeability," an exercise of that "something above the mind — Roosevelt's sixth sense, his supernal sensitiveness to hunches, his delight in proceeding not by the book but by the spirit."

But the trouble with hunches is that, not having any deliberated foundation, they are easily

swept away in a storm. If Roosevelt had proceeded by the book in arriving at this perception, he might have held it fast. At least the book might still have been on his table, after he found Stalin on his side in a world war.

It was not love that brought Stalin to his side, not conversion to democracy, but the opposite: he got there because, while helping Hitler against the democracies, Hitler turned on him and attacked him. The facts remained unchanged. The Soviet Union continued to be a dictatorship as absolute as any dictatorship in the world. But Roosevelt lost the courage — more exactly, the intellectual clarity — to face it. He began to deceive himself, and deceive those about him. He became soft-headed; so did they. He became fuzzy-minded; so did they. He didn't know much about Stalin or Lenin, and nothing at all about Marxism, and instead of reading up on it, or calling in somebody who did know, he cultivated his ignorance. So did they. Aided by the war fever, he reached the point of fixed self-deception where he could habitually speak of the Soviet Union as a "democracy," a "liberty-loving," a "peace-loving" nation, and could say of Stalin, who had then fully shown himself to be one of the bloodiest tyrants in history:

"I got along fine with Marshal Stalin. . . . I believe he is truly representative of the heart and soul of Russia. . . . I do not think any insoluble differences will arise among Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. . . . We came to the conferences with faith in each other . . . and now we have supplemented faith with definite knowledge."

With definite knowledge of what is not true — the most fatal of all forms of ignorance.

That condition of cultivated ignorance at Washington — not knowing because you don't want to know — is the whole cause of our present plight in the world. It extended into every department of our government, and every phase of our political and military strategy in relation to Russia. Our statesmen didn't know and didn't want to know what Russia's foreign policy was, what Russia's internal regime was, what Stalin meant by democracy, what the Great Purge of 1936 to 1938 was about, why and by what means the fabulous "confessions" were extorted.

They didn't know or want to know that the Chinese communists were hand-in-glove with Stalin in his plan to seize Manchuria, and then all China, and then all Asia, and then the world, for the totalitarian revolution. In spite of carefully documented rev-

elations of the inside facts in this matter (one of them published in the *Reader's Digest* for June, 1945) they swallowed hook-line-and-sinker the transparent hoax that the Chinese communists were some kind of middle-of-the-road agrarian liberals, independent of Moscow. For five years our whole Far Eastern policy was based on that Moscow-manufactured hoax.

And when the hoax was exploded, and their ignorant gullibility laid bare to the world, did they change their policy? Not for a second. They got out an enormous White Paper — 1,054 pages, and it weighs three pounds — trying to justify their policy on other grounds than the plainly obvious one that Stalin had played them for suckers. The important conclusion to be drawn from those three pounds of type is that the makers of our foreign policy were more concerned to defend their own past than the future of democratic civilization.

However, I am not discussing the Democratic administration here. I am not campaigning for the Republicans. For they have been just as ignorant, and more reprehensible, for they were the opposition. It was their natural function to study up and expose the substitution of Sunday School sentimentalism for informed diplomacy which has brought us into the fringes of another world

war. Instead they joined in the hymn singing. They chimed with the Democrats in what has been mistakenly called a bi-partisan foreign policy. It was a non-partisan no foreign policy — a harmony of ignorance, a clasping of hands on the fact that, not knowing what they were up against, they none of them had the slightest idea what to do.

## II

It might be thought purely American, this barging into a complex world-historical crisis with hunch in the place of informed judgment, and knowledgeability pinch-hitting for knowledge. But that is not the case. I do not know how much Winston Churchill will be able to say in apology for his part in handing half the world to a tyrant — how far he was hoodwinked by Stalin, how far outvoted by the Stalin-Roosevelt combination. He has not yet told us about that.

But he has said enough to show that he joined heartily in the conspiracy of self-deception. He made substantial contributions to that cultivated ignorance of Soviet policy which was Roosevelt's chief legacy in the field of foreign affairs. His guilt is greater, too, for in him ignorance requires more cultivation. He is not a man of knowledgeability, but of knowledge. He does not decide

by the spirit only but by the book. Indeed he had only to open his own book, *Great Contemporaries*, published in 1937, in order to read to the democracies' delegates assembled at Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam, two compact paragraphs containing the entire body of knowledge for the lack of which they threw away their opportunity to rebuild the world. I quote these few sentences from an essay which begins by describing Stalin as "inferior in wit, though not in crime":

"Communism is not only a creed. It is a plan of campaign. A communist is not only the holder of certain opinions; he is the pledged adept of a well-thought-out means of enforcing them. . . . The method of enforcement is as much a part of the communist faith as the doctrine itself. . . . Pacific propaganda may be made the mask of hatreds never before manifested among men. No faith need be, indeed may be, kept with non-communists. Every act of goodwill, of tolerance, of conciliation of mercy, of magnanimity on the part of Government or statesmen, is to be utilized for their ruin. Then when the time is ripe . . . every form of lethal violence from mob revolt to private assassination must be used without stint or com-

punction. The citadel will be stormed under the banners of Liberty and Democracy; and once the apparatus of power is in the hands of the Brotherhood, all opposition and contrary opinion must be extinguished by death. . . . The absolute rule of a self-chosen priesthood according to the dogmas it has learned by rote is to be imposed upon mankind without mitigation, progressively and forever. . . . To be forewarned should be to be forearmed."

How shall we reconcile this penetrating wisdom, a warning to the free world against every mistake its leaders have made in the last five years, with the giant part Churchill played in making those mistakes? How shall we reconcile it with his own private mistake in Yugoslavia — his answer to Fitzroy Maclean, who forewarned him that Tito was an avowed communist and that the regime set up by him would be pro-Soviet?

"Do you intend," he asked, "to make Yugoslavia your home after the war?"

"No, sir," I replied.

"Neither do I," he said. "And, that being so, the less you and I worry about the form of government they set up, the better. . . . What interests us is, which of them is doing most harm to the Germans?" \*

\*The conversation is quoted by Fitzroy Maclean in *Escape to Adventure*.



How shall we reconcile it with his saying to the House of Commons in November 1944, when Stalin was already preparing to use "every act of goodwill, of tolerance, of conciliation, of magnanimity" on the part of the democratic statesmen for their ruin:

"I believe with deep conviction that the warrior statesman at the head of Russia will lead the Russian peoples, all the peoples of Russia . . . into the sunlight of a broader and happier age for all, and with him in this task will march the British Commonwealth of Nations and the mighty U. S. A."

Whence came this deep "belief" except from the wish to believe it — and from Stalin's adroit pursuit of that policy of deception which Churchill had once so clearly seen to be a part of the very definition of communism? What else but a wanton extreme of ignorance about Russia could lead him to say:

"The reason why the United States and Great Britain have not been able to recognize it [the French National Committee of Liberation] as the government of France . . . is because we are not sure it represents the French nation in the same way as the governments of Britain, the United States and Soviet Russia represent the whole body of their people."

This of a government which keeps in slavery fourteen million of its people.

Churchill and Roosevelt were

great war leaders, but they both lacked the first essential of a military statesman — the sustained supremacy of mind over emotion. In them both, thoughts of the world's future were wholly swallowed up in the passion of the fight against Hitler. This could be inferred from their adoption, at a low point in their fortunes, of the gallant cry of "Unconditional surrender!" A fine gesture for Diamond Dick in a boy's story, but a blocking of multiple roads into the future, that, in the complexity of the existing situation, no sober statesman could have admitted into his thoughts.

Churchill, indeed, has frankly and even boastfully stated that he abandoned all other purposes and all other considerations in his single determination to beat Hitler. Referring to his past opposition to communism, he exclaimed in a broadcast, June 22, 1941: "I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it. But all this fades away before the spectacle which is now unfolding. . . . We have but one aim and one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime."

And more intimately he confided to his secretary: "I have only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and my life is much simplified thereby." His praise of Harry Hopkins, though little

short of adulation, could rise no higher than this: "There he sat, slim, frail, ill, but absolutely glowing with refined comprehension of the Cause. It was to be the defeat, ruin and slaughter of Hitler, *to the exclusion of all other purposes, loyalties or aims.* In the history of the United States few brighter flames have burned." (Italics mine.)

It is questionable, indeed, whether such an abdication of intelligence in high places is to be found in the previous history of the United States — or such praise of it in England. Whatever may become of the British Empire, these words of abandoned romanticism mark the end of the classic tradition of British diplomacy: the wary coolness, the unforgetfulness of complexity, the genius for solving an ever shifting parallelogram of political forces, the holding high of a clear conception of the future, however mired with emotions the present might be.

As we have seen, Churchill did unsay every word he had spoken about communism. He *unknew* every item of his knowledge about it. He achieved, by a somewhat strenuous exercise of will, the ignorance that our American leaders were naturally endowed with. But the result was the same: a war against one world conquering tyrant was fought

blindly, and for that reason another is at our gates.

It is important to pin this guilt of ignorance upon Churchill and Roosevelt, if only to lighten the task of self-education for their successors. Truman has wisely undertaken to get the truth about America into the minds of the Russians, but there remains the heavy task of getting the truth about Russia into the mind of Truman. Before a man can learn something, he has to know that he is ignorant of it, and even this preliminary knowledge is denied to those transfixed by the Churchill-Roosevelt tradition.

Truman got a merited horse-laugh from the initiated last year when he said: "I know Joe Stalin, he's a good fellow but he's helpless in the hands of the Politburo." Yet that was only the belated expression of a notion that was universal among his predecessors when Stalin failed to live up to his promises at Yalta — a notion that Stalin himself had been careful to plant in their minds in advance. Even now, in 1950, after Stalin has demonstrated by five solid years of treachery his unaltered belief that "no faith need be, indeed may be, kept with non-communists," Churchill remains so under his spell that he can apply to Stalin the supreme word of praise (if any word can be supreme):

"Remembering what a *wise man* he is, I was surprised to find him silly upon this point." (The Hess affair).\*

They were all taken for a ride by Stalin. The whole western world, because of the ignorance of its leaders, was taken for a five years' ride by Stalin. That is the very simple truth which those must see who aspire to lead us from here on.

So long as President Truman can say, as he did recently to Arthur Krock, "The real trouble with the Russians is that they are suffering from a complex of fear and inferiority where we are concerned," America is without leadership in the most subtle and complex and implacable danger she ever confronted. For the fixed conviction of the Russian and world communists that we are a degenerating society, that they are the society of the future, that there is a state of war-to-a-finish between us, and that in the long run, through whatever gives and takes, they are bound to win the war, has engendered in them a mood of belligerent superiority which, in a gang controlling one-third of the people and pretty nearly half the earth, threatens our national life as it has never been threatened before.

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\*Quoted without quotation marks in the interview of February 15, 1950.

For most men this was sufficiently demonstrated by the attack in Korea, an attack which had no cause or pretext except that Korea was the most exposed point in our defenses. To communists the whole Korean incident was but one battle in a world war that is in progress all the time — that has been "declared," too, a thousand times, in all their official books and party-state papers. But to the Truman-Marshall-Acheson school of diplomacy, last-ditch defenders of the policy of not knowing because you don't want to know, the attack in Korea must remain an impenetrable mystery. All they can learn from the sacrifice of 40,000 American lives in that battle was summed up by Dean Acheson in the brilliant thought (not quoted verbatim): Because of the unprovoked attack in Korea, we must be all the more careful not to do or say anything that might provoke the Chinese communists.

The Chinese communists will be "provoked" by one thing and one only — another exposed point in our defenses, another chance to win a battle for the totalitarian world-communist crusade.

Ignorance in the executive, ignorance in the makers of our foreign policy, at such a juncture, is more dangerous than treason.

# *The Americanization of Emily*

From the memoirs of Lieutenant Commander James Monroe Madison, USNR

**M**OST OF THE books written by Americans about the Second War will feature the amorous experiences of an American soldier with a foreign girl. This will be because of the nature of men and of books and of war, and because the most successful of the First War books was one American's recollections of his "shacking" with an English nurse. (Ed: He's now telling the gray-headed version of the same story. — See BOOKS.) I could write such a book about an English girl who lived with me for several weeks, but I'd have to spoil the story by disclosing that she did it not for love, but for convenience.

Emily was one of a dozen attractive, rather well-born, and intelligent English women who were fortunate enough to do their compulsory war work as chauffeurs for the top brass of the United States Navy. I say they were fortunate because, as American employes in London, they could eat in the American cafeterias and they could obtain American cigarets, soap, choco-

late, lipstick and nail varnish. And as the associates of high-ranking American officers, they had unlimited coupons for purchases in London and they could get dresses, shoes, brassieres, girdles, cosmetics and nylons from New York. An admiral could command forty-eight-hour service on such items.

But even with these advantages, to a sensitive woman like Emily the mechanics of living in 1944 London could be appalling. She was twenty-four and normally she would have been married and had a home. But the men among whom she would have found a husband were dead or displaced, and she was still living with her family in Kent. Normally the family home was comfortable, but now it was straitened. And normally a Kentish village is within comfortable commuting distance of London's Grosvenor Square, but with troop movements and the bombs one could be from 5 a. m. until midnight getting to London and back. Yet when Emily tried to

live in London she could obtain only a depressing flat far out in the suburbs, with ancient and erratic plumbing, and with at least two other women in the flat with her.

From 8 A.M. until 5 P.M. Emily wore the dowdy khaki uniform with cotton stockings and flat-heeled shoes. If she accepted an invitation to cocktails and dinner, she either had to wear the uniform or else try to dress out of a valise in a dirty, crowded, public washroom. Most of the women just wore the uniforms. They bathed perhaps once a week. They stood up at the bars with their men, and took their love either in a jeep or lying in the park. But Emily was too fine for this. When she went out without a bath, in her uniform, tired, feeling like a sloven, she was poor company; she hadn't found any American she was willing to shack up with; and thus, more and more frequently, she had been alone.

I met Emily in April 1944, when the Admiral and I arrived in London for the Normandy show. On the first day she happened to be assigned to drive me on my chores. She drove me to a supply depot and waited two hours while I traded a case of whiskey and a jeep for a crate of oranges, six dozen eggs, two Swift's Premium hams, and a

quarter of beef, so the Admiral and I wouldn't have to breakfast on mushrooms-and-sawdust while we planned the invasion. Then we drove back to the Dorchester Hotel, where I supervised the transfer of this loot to the proper pantry.

Next we went to the Scotch House, where Emily helped me select some tweed for the Admiral's wife and daughter. Then we proceeded to the White Tower restaurant for a late but leisurely lunch on steak sandwiches, with wine and coffee. I didn't feel equal to the strawberries with pure cream, but I urged them on Emily and she couldn't refuse.

"Is this a typical day's work for you, Commander?" she asked.

"Not quite," I answered. "This is more strenuous than usual. We only arrived yesterday, so I have to work hard until I get the Admiral squared away."

She shook her head. "You Americans never cease to amaze me. The earth belongs to you, doesn't it?"

"Completely. For a long time it belonged to goddam British bastards. Now it belongs to goddam American bastards. That's the way it goes."

"And we British behaved just like you Americans do?"

"Sure. Maybe worse. Power only changes hands. Power itself never changes much. Most own-

ers-of-the-earth behave in the same manner."

"I suppose that's true," she said. "But somehow I can't imagine you in this role. I've read two of your books. I can't imagine the author of those books cheerfully procuring a crate of oranges and casually shopping for an Admiral's fat wife on the eve of the invasion."

I chuckled. "What would you have me doing? Training a platoon of flame-throwers? This happens to be my assignment. There is some virtue in doing the tasks assigned to one, isn't there?"

"Is there? I'm asking you. Where is the virtue in your job? Do you know what one orange from that crate, or one egg from that six dozen, or one slice from those two hams — do you know what they would mean to an average English family?"

"Sure I know."

"And it doesn't bother you?"

"No, not a great deal," I said. "I'm sorry for all the families in England who don't have oranges or eggs or ham. I wish I could help them. But you must consider it this way. Down there in that warehouse on the docks there is a considerable stock of oranges, eggs and ham. But they were not brought here to be distributed among English families. They were brought here to be distributed among powerful

Americans. Down there this morning I wasn't competing with Englishmen; I was competing with other powerful Americans. I didn't take orange juice away from some rickety English child; I only took it away from some fat American general. If those oranges, eggs and hams didn't grace my Admiral's board at the Dorchester, they'd grace some general's board at Claridge's. So why should I feel guilty about my part in such competition? Why shouldn't I take pride in my own clever success?"

"I don't know," Emily said. "I guess you're right. But I wish you didn't have to do it — and I wish you didn't have quite so clever an explanation."

## II

I looked at her for a moment. She was a sensitive woman. Soft, brown hair . . . slender hands . . . fine, delicate features . . . deep, brown eyes that looked as if they could cry easily.

"When you're caught in a war, Emily," I said, "you must protect yourself as best you can. A man can either sneer his way through, cry his way through, or chuckle his way through. I try to chuckle."

After lunch Emily drove me far over to another supply depot where I procured some soft American toilet paper for the Admiral

and myself — we recoiled from that sandpaper-like British variety in the hotels — and then Emily brought me back to the Ministry of Information, where I had to clear some new publicity for the Admiral. It was there that she decided that she would, after all, have dinner with me.

I asked her if she had any clothes in London, and she said yes, she had some in a bag in a checkroom at Charing Cross Station.

"Then I tell you what you do," I said. "I'll be in here half an hour, so instead of your waiting for me I believe the American taxpayers would approve your taking this good Chevrolet and going for that bag. Then you can pick me up here, and you can change at my place before dinner. The Admiral likes to dine with women who wear dresses."

The Dorchester, only three blocks from Grosvenor Square, is the most luxurious and modern of London's hotels. The bathrooms are huge, Romanesque affairs with seven-foot-long tubs over which are buttons to summon maid, waiter or valet. The bath mats are deep and soft, the towels are thick and big enough to swathe your entire body, there is a bidet and a dressing table, and some of the toilet seats are covered with chamois skin.

Emily and I arrived there at

5:20, and by 5:30 she was stretched full length in the hot water with a whole, fat bar of American Palmolive soap lathering around her. The maid handed her a Scotch-and-soda, then took her dress and pressed it. On the dressing table Emily found a new Revlon lipstick and face powder in her shade, and nylons, and a bottle of Chanel No. 5, genuine, from the Azores. I shouted to her that I had to go out for an hour and why didn't she take a nap.

When I returned at 7:30 Emily had spent an hour in my bathroom and an hour in my bed, and she was a different person. She could smile and laugh, and her eyes sparkled. The high heels, the new nylons, and the girle had given her hips and legs and ankles; the lacy black dress had given her breasts and thighs. The maid had helped with her hair. Emily looked like one of the valuable women of the world. We spent the evening in the Dorchester supper room, where she danced with me and the Admiral and with our friends. She ate a thick steak and drank sparkling burgundy. At midnight there was no point in her sallying forth in the blackout toward Kent or toward some friend's distant, uncomfortable flat. I had a luxurious extra bed only three blocks from where she worked.

Ten weeks of living with me at



the Dorchester changed Emily's life. No longer did she have to rise at 5 a. m. and begin fighting crowds. She got up at seven, showered, breakfasted on American oranges, ham and eggs while she read *The Chronicle*; then she put on a pressed uniform and strolled three blocks to work. She returned at noon and freshened, often took a nap, and at five she relaxed in the tub. She had a masseuse to rub her. She had a maid to keep her clothes, and we had new clothes flown to her from Bergdorf-Goodman's. She took American vitamin tablets and ate rich United States Navy ice cream. On the nights when I was in London she dined with me and the Admiral, and when the Admiral and I were away at Exeter or Plymouth or Dartmouth, or in Normandy, she lived there alone and perhaps dined with some of our friends.

Maybe Emily and I fell in love. I don't know. We began making love on the second or third night, but it was three weeks before she could have an orgasm and this worried her and she went to her doctor. He told her it was because she was still tired and nervous and afraid and couldn't relax. During the fourth week this shadow passed. Everyone noticed the improvement in her appearance and disposition, and everyone said it was because

she was in love with me. I don't know. She felt very dear to me at times, as though she belonged to me, but I imagine that the change was wrought primarily by the bathroom, the bed, the rest, the relief from queues and constipation.

"I believe I'm in love with you, Jimmy," she told me once. "But how can I be certain whether I am or not? Mustn't Cinderella always love the Prince? I live with you. I was so desperate for what you could give me that I moved in with you the first night. To possess me you didn't have to woo and win me; you only had to lend me your bathroom."

"Let's say it's love, Emily," I said. "What've we got to lose?"

"Sure," she said, "we'll call it love. But I doubt that there can ever be real love between two people who aren't equals. I'm your equal only in birth and sensitivity and aspiration. You can command all the comforts which are so necessary to me and which I have suffered so much for lack of. You've helped me. But even now I can't really be at my best with you because I'm so desperately afraid of having to go back to queues and public washrooms when you leave."

One night, just before I left the ETO to return to the Pa-



cific, Emily had a nightmare. Her screaming waked me, and I jumped over in her bed and shook her and waked her and when she had calmed down we talked.

"I'm scared, Jimmy," she said. "We English are supposed to be winning the war, but we are really losing it. At least me and my sort are losing. Take the group of girls I work with. We're supposed to be among England's best. But what do we do? Each day we sit in our little room and wait for some American officer to decide to go somewhere, and we talk about the particular Americans who are keeping us. We talk about our abortions. Five of us

have had abortions within the last few months. Not me — yet. But I'm predatory now and I admit it. When you are gone I'm for sale to most any man who can give me convenience, and who isn't too horribly odious. My price is a bathroom and privacy and rest and protection from queues. We English are becoming a nation of prostitutes. We don't send our little brothers out to pimp for us yet, but give us time and we will."

Three days later Emily stood at Croydon and waved goodbye to me. She was holding all that I had left her: fifty pounds, a new Revlon lipstick, and a fresh bottle of Chanel No. 5.

*(Further adventures of Commander  
Madison will appear in subsequent  
issues of the NEW MERCURY.)*



**Souvenirs of  
Mencken, et al . . .**

PAUL ARMSTRONG called Mencken and me on the telephone early one Sunday morning in a state of great excitement. "I have found something wonderful in the way of writing," he shouted over the phone, "and you two ought to hear of it!" We inquired sleepily what it was, but he wouldn't tell us, preferring, he insisted, to apprise us of his great discovery in person. Well, we said, we would be in our editorial offices around two o'clock (we often worked on Sundays) and to come around then. At two sharp, the door burst open and Armstrong rushed in. "Here," he yelled, "is the goddamnedest most beautiful stuff I've ever read! I got hold of it only yesterday and I tell you it's remarkable. You've got to read it right away and see for yourselves!"

Whereupon he thrust at us the Bible.

\* \* \*

Hugo Schemke is his name. He has been a table waiter at Luchow's celebrated spa in East Fourteenth Street, New York, since the place opened in 1880 and during that time has been the favorite servitor of the elect in arts and letters who have waded in its foods and bathed in its exhilarating waters. One of his most devoted sitters was James Gibbons Huneker, that critic *par excellence*. It was Huneker who first introduced Mencken and myself in our younger days to Hugo, and it has been Hugo since Jim's passing who has regaled us with biographical data about him. Hugo admired the gay old boy as much as we did, and what fascinated, even awed, him was Jim's successful way with the ladies.

"Do you know," Hugo once leaned over the *bratwurst mit sardellen klops* confidently to whisper to us, "that some of those famous Metropolitan Opera House

singers were so awful jealous of him they would come down and press their greasepainted noses so hard against the windows to spy what other singer he was maybe lunching with that Otto, the window-washer, had to scrub off the panes with sandpaper?"

\* \* \*

Of the literati with bibbing talents, Frank Harris was not the least. One of his favorite tipples, peculiarly enough, was the Orange Blossom cocktail, a concoction of gin and orange juice more suited to the feminine palate than to a toughly experienced one like his. When we used to convene with him of late afternoons at the old Holland House bar, he took pleasure in downing at least a dozen or more of the things at a single sitting and the only reaction noticeable in him was an increased flow of conversation, at which he was a master.

Few men I have met in my lifetime were as fascinating as he when his tongue started wagging. "Wilde's wit," he would observe, "was the wit of calculation and excellent acting. He could manage an impromptu air though one well appreciated that not only had he carefully prepared his rejoinders beforehand but had rehearsed their timing and delivery." Or, "Shaw's skill lies in persuading one with his personality before trying to persuade

one with his words." Or again, "I am, really, a great writer; my only difficulty is in finding great readers."

These are merely some random samples that stick in my memory. Harris' conversations were cataclysms that splashed one in all directions. It was nigh impossible to put in a word edgewise, for two good reasons. In the first place, he would talk so rapidly and steadily that, had one wished to put it in, one would first have had to hit him over the head with some blunt instrument. And in the second place, he was altogether too interesting for anyone to wish to interrupt him.

\* \* \*

Jack Barrymore, or John as he more dignifiedly called himself when he abandoned musical comedy for the drama, took an instant dislike to me when I met him for the first time at a small supper party given for Mencken and myself some thirty years ago by Zoë Akins, an old friend of ours, in her atelier on lower Fifth Avenue. He said nothing, but contented himself with fixing his bulging left eye on me and looking at me with an expression which was a mixture of that of a philatelist studying a counterfeit Peruvian stamp through a microscope and that of a small boy unbelievably beholding his first giraffe. Why he disrelished me, I

had no idea, other than the distaste of the Barrymore family since the days of Papa Maurice for dramatic critics *in toto*. Maurice, incidentally, will be remembered for his remark to one of the species whom he encountered in the men's room of the old Hoffman House in the process of straining himself desperately to negotiate a normally simple act of nature. "Ah," drawled Maurice, "the strictures of the press!"

I didn't again encounter Jack, or John as he then was, until twenty years later, when I had a supper engagement at the Monte Carlo and was waiting for the appearance of my fair guest. Barrymore, as drunk as a lord, staggered through the door and spotted me. "George," he mumbled, wrapping an arm affectionately around my neck, "you're just the one I've been wanting to run into!" Whereupon he proposed that, while we were both waiting for our engagements to show up, I buy him a drink, and shakily deposited both his person and mine at one of the bar tables. "Yes, Georgie," he belched, "you're the one I've wanted to see, 'cause I got something to tell you." And then, propping himself against the table as best he could and steadying himself against one of the noblest jags of modern times, he outlined to me, between hiccups, his new concep-

tion of the role of Macbeth, and a brilliantly intelligent one it was.

\* \* \*

Of all the low comedians in burlesque, none ever so amused Mencken and me as the German dialect George Bickel of the famous team of Watson, Bickel and Wrothe. We respected his peculiar genius so much, indeed, that we sought out others who admired him and set about organizing a Bickel Alumni Club privately to honor the great man. Among the fervent devotees were Theodore Dreiser, Anita Loos, William H. Taft, Ethel Barrymore, Hermann Oelrichs, Jim Tully, William K. Vanderbilt, Sherwood Anderson, James J. Corbett, William Lyon Phelps, Willard Huntington Wright, John D. Williams, and Victor Herbert. One night, dining with our mutual friend, Marguerite Clark, in her New York apartment, we complimented our hostess on the excellence of the delicacies served us. Quite unaware of the esteem in which we held Bickel, she told us that she had found an admirable new cook who was the widow of our hero.

We went into the kitchen and kissed her on both cheeks.

\* \* \*

W. C. Fields was another clown whom we both venerated to the extent of one day inviting him to join us in a five o'clock drink.

"It will be an amusing session," Mencken forecast. "He surely is a funny fellow and we will get some elegant laughs." Fields duly appeared at the appointed moment. In his pockets were all of Ibsen's published plays. And during the entire two hours we sat together he held forth very solemnly on the dramatist who, it seemed, was his particular enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

Lord Dunsany had been a valued contributor to *The Smart Set* and, when he came to this country on his maiden visit, Mencken and I started out to entertain him a bit. At our first personal meeting with him, we asked him at luncheon what he would like to start off with. "I have heard much about your American oysters and would relish trying them," he replied. The waiter brought him the customary half-dozen. "Oh, no, I should like to begin with two dozen," he corrected the waiter. When the two dozen were served, Dunsany waved aside the proffered salt shaker, demanded the sugar bowl, doused the bivalves with its entire contents, and one by one gobbled them. A broad smile enveloped his features. "Excellent!" he proclaimed. "But I would not be so sure of them without the sugar."

\* \* \*

Though I have been going to the theatre professionally for more than forty years now, I have yet to hear an American youngster in an American middle-class play pronounce certain words as so many such youngsters invariably do. Playwrights who do not remember their own childhood and youth insist rather upon having them speak with more or less literary exactness, as if they were Old Vic actors in embryo. I hope that I shall live long enough to see the day when a kid will come out realistically with sassapilla, cramberry, punkin, carmel, lozenger, celry, lickrish, marshmellow, choclit, cinnumun, skyrockit, oringe, meducin, Chrismuss, champeen, and all the other lovely short-pants sounds.

\* \* \*

When he was preparing for production the revue, *The Seven Lively Arts*, Billy Rose got into touch with me about one of the sketches, the work of Moss Hart, which dealt with me in what he thought was a Torquemada manner, detailed it to me, and allowed in a friendly and gracious spirit that, if I wished, he would see to it that it was toned down. I told him that the sketch seemed to me, on the contrary, to be much too mild and offered him several suggestions as to how to make it much tougher. For some reason,

he didn't accept them and the sketch was unfortunately played as Hart had written it, to the disappointment of many in the audience, who appeared to agree with me that it was altogether too gentle.

\* \* \*

Cedric Hardwicke, himself an actor and a good one, is one of the best critics of acting I have encountered. Speaking of the difficulty of a mature actress' playing a young girl role, he explains, "And small wonder. A mature actress who plays such a role must first strip herself completely of everything she has built herself up to be and must start anew. The struggle is one between herself as she is and technical skill that camouflages it. Most adult actresses who try to play young girl roles fail to be convincing because they are concerned with the looks and voice of the role alone and not with the all-important essential spirit."

\* \* \*

The self-confidence of amateurs is the envy of professionals.

\* \* \*

On my visit to Hollywood, mentioned in an earlier installment of these memoirs, I was introduced to the movie director, David Butler, a genial soul who seemed to be more than normally pleased to meet me. Noticing my amazement, he explained his in-

terest. "You are," he said, "the only critic in the last half-century who has ever mentioned my mother's name." Observing my continued puzzlement, he went on to say that his mother was one of the few women on the American stage who had ever played Hamlet.

\* \* \*

When Mencken and I took over the joint editorship of *The Smart Set*, the first valuable suggestion we received was from, of all people, the late George M. Cohan, who had long been a friend of mine. While playing in Philadelphia some years before, he had run across a reporter on the Philadelphia *North American* who had literary ambitions, had written a story, and had asked him to read it. Cohan had liked the story and remembered it, and he now recommended it and its author to us. We sent for the manuscript and, when it arrived, fell upon it. It turned out to be a hilarious tale of an undertaker who adopted modern advertising methods to the promotion of his business and, though it was almost of novel length and would fill at least nine-tenths of the magazine, we published it — a quarter of a century before Harold Ross did much the same thing with John Hersey's "Hiroshima" in *The New Yorker* — in our very first number. — GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

# ANTIBIOTICS HIT THE DOCTOR'S WALLET



by Noah Fabricant, M.D., and Terry Hillel

THE DOCTOR'S dilemma celebrated by George Bernard Shaw has in recent years been raised to a higher dimension of Shavian irony by the advent of the so-called miracle drugs. Medical men, of course, appreciate more deeply than any layman the ever more effective tools of healing made available by research. At the same time, they are increasingly aware that every new piece of laboratory magic in the medical field hits directly at their pocketbooks.

Never before has the psychological conflict between the physician as healer and the physician as economic man been more acutely in evidence. To put the matter in simplest terms, many an ailment that required prolonged and costly treatment today yields to quick and cheap therapy. Entire categories of disease which used to keep doctors solvent year in and year out have

been reduced to an easily managed and, from the M.D.'s angle, unprofitable estate. It speaks well for the ethics of the medical community that, by and large, its enthusiasm for miracle medications remains high notwithstanding.

Both practice and purse have been especially hard hit in three medical-surgical specialties: ear, nose and throat; genito-urinary diseases; and allergy. Already, by reason of the widespread use of sulfonamides, antibiotics and antihistamine drugs, the first two specialties have passed their popularity peaks, while allergy, a relatively newer field of specialization, has begun to show signs of decline. This state of affairs provokes an all-too-human ambivalence with respect to these drugs, as the doctors affected hail new life and pain savers with a joy that is somehow cheerless.

Time was when the genito-

urinary specialist and the ear-nose-and-throat man could count on a number of bread-and-butter diseases for their basic income. Gonorrhea, syphilis and other venereal afflictions called for long and lucrative treatment in office and hospital, lasting months and even years. For the respiratory tract specialist, each new winter brought a fresh crop of middle ear infections, mastoid operations, intracranial complications, severe sinus conditions, and a wide variety of throat and neck infections. But from their first appearance, the sulfonamides and antibiotics began to harvest the crop too easily, exacting tribute from the medical men for the advantages accruing to their patients.

Dr. Evarts A. Graham, professor of surgery at Washington University School of Medicine and recipient of the American Medical Association's Distinguished Service Award for 1950, recently stated his conviction that surgery had passed its peak and is now on the downgrade. Such drugs as penicillin and ACTH, he believes, will some day make most operations unnecessary. Eventually a surgeon's work will be restricted to treatment of injuries due to accidents and correction of malformations at birth.

For them, ear-nose-and-throat

men begin to feel, Dr. Graham's "eventually" is not in the distant future but closely impending. As far as some aspects of their specialty is concerned, indeed, it is here and now.

In the case of mastoid surgery, shrinking incidence was the subject of an address before the American Otological Society by its president, Dr. Wesley C. Bowers, as far back as 1944, at a time when penicillin was not yet widely available. "With the advent of chemotherapy," he declared, "the number of cases of mastoiditis and its sequelae — particularly meningitis — has steadily declined. . . . The decline in cases has already made it difficult to teach our resident physicians how to perform adequate mastoidectomies."

How importantly the picture has been changed for many a previously prosperous otolaryngologist can be deduced from the ever-growing list of antibiotics: penicillin, streptomycin, neomycin, chloromycetin, terramycin and their many derivatives. All of these drugs are cancelling out once popular surgical procedures, and to a great extent they are transferring otolaryngology from the specialist's domain to the general practitioner. Indeed, antibiotics have given the non-specialist a world of courage in handling his own patients unas-



sisted in treating infections of the ear, nose and throat passages.

In the past, many middle-ear infections, for instance, advanced to a stage requiring surgical puncture of the ear drum, which was beyond the capabilities of the average general medico. Today, early administration of infection fighters stops the pathologic process in its tracks and removes the need for surgical intervention. The general practitioner must call the specialist into consultation only when complications are imminent or when progress appears to be suspiciously slow.

This loss of patients for the ear-nose-and-throat doctor because of the newer medicaments is being made more acute by increasingly conservative attitudes toward operations in this area generally. Unhappily, the promiscuous and routine removal of tonsils — now abandoned by competent specialists — continues to be a great American ritual, often performed for no valid reason and with no therapeutic profit. In a jibe on this score, Dr. Lyman G. Richards, a Harvard throat specialist, has said: "Never in the history of medicine have so many physicians owed so much economic security to a single operation as to tonsillectomy."

Otolaryngologists have also

adopted, and with no less good reason, a more conservative view of sinus operations. A generation ago, and even more recently, surgical treatment of sinus diseases represented a high-income field. It is now recognized that in most instances operations are not necessary. Less remunerative procedures, such as irrigation, suction and the use of antibiotics, have gained an increasing number of adherents among specialists. There remain, of course, certain sinus conditions in which surgical measures are indispensable.

Some physicians will deny the deepening crisis in their specialties, almost as if it implied derogation of their specialized talents. But the facts are clear enough. The decreasing attendance of ear-nose-and-throat men, genito-urinary specialists and allergists at national medical conventions is a matter of record; it reflects shrinkage of those professional areas.

A pertinent survey in 1948 made the situation fairly explicit. Dr. Richards at that time summarized the results of a questionnaire sent to five hundred members of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, the top national organization of eye, ear, nose and throat physicians. Eighty-six per cent of the members stated definitely that they believed the field of

otolaryngology to be shrinking, and nearly all of these attributed the decline to the growing use of the sulfa drugs and penicillin. Their replies also underlined the inroads of this field by competing doctors — allergists, radiologists, thoracic surgeons, plastic surgeons, general practitioners, at least a few of whom have been emboldened by the availability of the new drugs.

## II

Genito-urinary specialists have, in some respects, been even harder hit by the miracle medicines than their brethren in the ear-nose-and-throat domain. With the antibiotics at his command, every general practitioner dares tackle the venereal diseases. Thus the specialists not only are losing their per-case income, but they are getting fewer cases.

Dr. John H. Stokes, director of the Institute for the Study of Venereal Diseases at the University of Pennsylvania, has summed up what the antibiotics have done for V.D. control as follows: (1) They have provided almost ideally safe, reactionless, and increasingly inexpensive treatment for syphilis, gonorrhea and other venereal diseases. (2) They have initiated treatment so rapid that cure is a matter of hours or days instead of weeks, months or years. (3) They have

provided safe and painless protection of the syphilitic mother and her unborn child. (4) They have stripped congenital syphilis of its ancient terrors. (5) They have put oral prophylaxis and the single-shot cure on the horizon of the practical. (6) Finally, antibiotics have returned the management of venereal disease to the general practitioner, if not yet to the patient himself.

Small wonder that some genito-urinary men, once the most profitable of the medical specialties, are nostalgic for the bad old days of prolonged treatment with arsenic, bismuth and mercury preparations. A short dozen years ago, the patient stricken by syphilis faced weekly injections of arsenicals and bismuth compounds for not less than a year, usually longer. In those days, too, the longer a gonorrhea victim delayed the start of treatment, the longer it took to effect a cure. Truly the best patient was a millionaire with a positive Wasserman. Now, once the diagnosis of venereal infection is made, it is a comparatively simple matter for any doctor to administer one or more of the antibiotics in appropriate doses.

A word is in place here about the so-called "male climacteric." Whether the pharmaceutical houses crusaded this concept before the physicians or *vice versa* is

open to argument. The fact is that in recent years some members of both groups have tried to make capital, in the literal sense, of the male "change of life," based on the observation that sex gland activity declines in middle age in men as well as in women. This state is marked by headaches, hot and cold flashes, tingling sensations, dizziness and numbness.

While there probably is a true climacteric in some men, it is decidedly uncommon; there is no period of loss of sexual function in the male analogous to the menopause in the female. Nevertheless, it has been claimed that administration of the male hormone will banish mental fatigue and headaches, ease heart pain, restore muscular vigor and slow up declining sexual activity.

The abuses to which hormone therapy has been subjected have been stressed by a nationally known Chicago urologist, Dr. Herman L. Kretchmer: "I have seen patients with mental problems, with family incompatibility, with fear complexes and with impotence, for whom diagnoses of male climacterium were made and who were advised to take long courses of hormone therapy. Castrated patients without any subjective symptoms have been advised to take hormone injections so as to make them fertile.

Such use has been tragic in many instances."

The third of the principal victims of the changing medical times, the allergist, must contend not only with inroads on his practice made by the antihistaminic drugs, but with the competition of his psychiatric confreres. Some allergists are still loath to admit that a sizeable number of "allergic" disorders are psychogenic. Such an acknowledgement might go a long way toward putting them out of business, and even honest men are not immune to economic motivations.

The more immediate threat to the allergist, however, comes from the parade of antihistaminic drugs, with such bizarre names as benadryl, pyribenzamine, tagathen, phenergan, neo-antergan, hydrillin, antistine, therophin, coricidin, neohetramine, histadyl, diatrin, thenylene and trimeton. Consider the changes wrought in hay fever therapy alone. For many years the onset of the hay fever season saw a mass exodus of sufferers from areas of high pollination to regions where the offending plants grew sparsely or not at all. Some victims contrived to remain at home in air-filtered, air-conditioned rooms. Others submitted to desensitization, which consists of injection of a series of graduated doses of the

allergen to which the patient has been found to be sensitive.

This immunizing process is slow, tedious and expensive and has definite limitations. It may protect a hay-fever sufferer in a year when pollen happens to be light, and give little protection when the pollen count is high. Desensitization is almost never complete, and courses must be repeated periodically. Few allergists, and fewer patients, have expressed enduring satisfaction with results. Both were therefore ripe for the advent of the antihistamines and seized upon them.

These drugs are described as counteracting the release of the allergy component, histamine. They have been found effective in varying degrees in a number of allergic conditions, in addition to hay fever. It should be emphasized at this point that these drugs are not always effective, and that they have only ameliorating properties at best, relieving for short periods such symptoms as sneezing, itching and the watery discharge from nasal passages. As with all drugs, some patients are found to be allergic to the anti-allergy medications themselves, to the very agents expected to combat the allergy. In some persons, antihistaminic drugs induce soporific effects, dizziness, headache, nausea and anemia.

Self-medication after self-diagnosis is even more of a menace to the health of the patient than the economic interests of the allergist. Yet hay fever sufferers and those with other allergic ailments seem to find it increasingly more expedient to swallow over-the-counter tablets to get quick relief than to submit to long treatment.

In any event, the use of antihistaminic drugs is shortening the period of treatment. To that extent it is reducing the allergist's earnings, though he does not as yet feel the pinch as sharply as the genito-urologist or the ear-nose-and-throat man. Conservative allergists are now casting a baleful eye at those of their rash colleagues who had extolled the antihistaminic drugs too rashly and immoderately. Most of the premature enthusiasts themselves wish they had held their tongues. Over-the-counter sale of these drugs is emptying many an allergist's waiting room to such an extent that he can now have what used to be an incredible experience for him: an extended summer or autumn vacation.

On the whole, medical men welcome the progress in drugs despite its deleterious financial effects. If they show any annoyance in appraising the situation, it is largely because the public seems so blithely unconscious of their unselfishness in this matter.



## ***Foreign Intelligence***

### ★ In the European Jungle

AMERICANS AND Europeans today have few experiences in common, perhaps fewer now than at any time in this century. In the last ten years, Americans have not had to lie or cheat or steal in order to survive. The men have not had to hide under the bed while their wives and daughters were being raped. The women have not had to plead with peasants on street corners, trying to exchange an heirloom for a cabbage; they have never had to give their bodies to a policeman to keep their children from starving or themselves from being arrested and possibly killed.

Those among us who have gone through such experiences, and those who are still going through them, have emerged as different persons. Quite aside from the political conflict itself, the bare

struggle for survival in Europe has left a permanent mark on us.

What, for instance, can you expect from someone like Hannah? She was a young Jewish girl who somehow had secured "Aryan" papers for herself and was working as a nurse in a German military hospital in Budapest. It is difficult to imagine that anyone would have the nerve to pose as a Gentile in such surroundings, but her audacity was so great that she succeeded in her ruse. For years, Hannah had been waiting for the Soviet troops to free the city. When at last this moment came she rushed out to meet the liberators. Their encounter became a tragic misunderstanding. She had no time to tell her story. She was attacked right there and then. Dazed and injured, she finally went back to

the Germans, with her false papers and the bruises on her body and mind. She had been forced to return to the arch enemy because she had failed to make friends with her friends. Crushed between two powers, how could she emerge with her integrity intact?

What can you expect from a Polish boy like Michael, who was a young friend of mine? His parents had been arrested by the Gestapo. His mother died after suffering for two years in the concentration camp of Auschwitz. His father was more fortunate: he was trampled to death under the boots of the Germans during the first interrogation.

The boy, then fifteen years old, disappeared into the Polish Underground. After the war, he lined up in front of the American Consulate, begging to serve in the American Army. His efforts were in vain. The American authorities told him to go back to liberated Poland. This he did. Seeing his country under another occupation, he again became a partisan, this time against the Russians. But a guerilla fighter in peacetime necessarily becomes an outlaw. How could Michael emerge with his integrity intact?

There were innumerable Michaels, and innumerable Hannahs.

Girls of all classes and ages, some of them mere children, were

attacked by the Russians. Their mothers, in an attempt to minimize the importance of this experience, told them it was just another physical act which might be compared with a visit to the dentist. What else could the women tell them? Later, these girls found it natural to fraternize with the American and British soldiers, and they brought home Lucky Strikes and Navy Cuts which one could exchange for bread. What could the jobless parents say? They were silent, and ate the bread.

The boys could not find work in countries from which the Russians were deporting whole factories, and from which they already had taken all the horses, cattle and hogs, so they quickly learned to make a living on the black market. By breaking the laws of the conquerors one could make a fortune. You could keep alive only by cheating, stealing, smuggling.

Many girls went to the hospital for abortions and diseases, many boys went to jail. But youth is tough and daring, and such trifles never stopped them. The girls continued to bring home chocolate and cigarettes, and the boys continued their black markets deals.

When the Americans and British left, the Russian-dominated lands were organized on the So-

viet pattern, and with it came the various police forces. We finally had four of them: the economic police, the political police, then the regular police who were virtually ignored, as they were only after criminals; and, in the end, the flower of all the police forces, the MVD.

People began to be arrested for almost anything. A friend of mine, waiting for the bus, was overheard saying to his wife, "The Russians won't leave Eastern Europe without a war." He spent a year in prison for this remark.

The police — with the exception of the MVD — could be bribed, but only with pure gold. Nothing but gold had any value in those days. For gold you could get your father or husband out of jail. For one or two kilos of gold even a Nazi could buy his way out of prison. The police would take no diamonds or jewels. No one had the time and patience to employ experts to evaluate the gems. For a woman to have an affair with a policeman was then just as fascinating as a liaison with the King or a prince of the blood in the Versailles of the eighteenth century.

Descriptions of the Decadent West and the hellhole which the United States was supposed to be, filled the columns of the papers, with the exception of the space

that was devoted to eulogizing the Soviet paradise. The uninformed masses of the people, fed this kind of propaganda day in and day out, naturally were often misled.

For instance, during a meeting of a workers committee a veteran Hungarian communist stood up and asked humbly why the enemies of the people were deported to lovely Siberia, instead of being sent to this hell on earth, the United States. Alas, before anyone could explain his blunder to him, he was arrested.

I was exceptionally fortunate after the war. Landing in the ruins of Budapest, clad in a pair of breeches and a sheepskin coat, I immediately found a job as a waitress in a snack bar which also served liquor. To become a waitress was a great stroke of luck because it meant one would be fed. Food was the most important thing after the war.

The bar was financed by a German woman who complacently explained to her waitresses why she, a German, was now in such a privileged position.

"I never listened to the BBC or the American radio," she said. "During the war, I only listened to Mr. Goebbels. That's how I saved my fortune. Thanks to Mr. Goebbels, I learned how the Russians would behave in Europe. So I didn't leave my jewels in the



safe nor my money in the bank. Everything had been long, and deeply, buried. Now I've dug it all out, ja, ja. . . ."

No one resented her talk, we just laughed it off. What people in the West would call cynicism now became our new sense of humor. We had known long ago that the German woman had acted wisely. And so we continued to work for her quite cheerfully, skinny and starving as we were, parading in our dresses made of towels, napkins and curtains.

The German woman was even so kind as to feed me extra tidbits. Crouching behind the buffet, she often fished steaming potatoes out of her pot for me, whispering, "*Who* won the war, *who*?" "The Poles," I used to answer, with the same mocking and indulgent smile that I saw on her face.

In this way people who had fallen into the same trap behind the Iron Curtain got along with each other in their own private and human world, of which the politicians know so little.

After so many years we all had acquired a sharp nose for immorality, hypocrisy and propaganda. We no longer understood the doings of the British and Americans, with their complete ignorance of Russian designs and actions, and our entire set of ideas and ideals changed for new

ones better suited for the new world in which we had to live.

Our bar was flourishing, although it had no license. The license was out of the question because the owner was a Countess. And Stalinism says, to paraphrase the words of the late George Orwell, "Everybody is equal, but the Communists are equaler." So we had to bribe the economic police — which was the normal procedure — to prevent the establishment from being closed down.

The officers of the economic police came into our bar every day and drank our precious coffee and our still more precious brandy. Needless to say, they paid nothing. On top of it, they were paid in gold for leaving us in business.

Later on, despite all bribes, the bar was closed down on orders of the MVD. The bar had been "bought" by a communist who had changed it into a saloon reminiscent of the gold rush days. Amidst clouds of smoke communists, their satellites, and the big and little crooks traded in currency, jewels and gold. Milling among this odd assortment of people were gorgeous Diamond Lils who had to work overtime to make a living. The flesh-market competition was terrific, and there were no more GI's around to take care of these hordes of girls.



My only wish, now that I was through as a waitress, was to get out of the country, and I was planning my escape to the West. But before leaving the Russian-dominated territory forever, I wanted to say goodbye to my Polish family in Warsaw whom I had not seen in six years. This was a dangerous undertaking. If ever I were captured and had to explain the true reason for my trip, such an excuse would sound like the idiotic pretext of a diletante spy, and I might be sent to Siberia.

I found a way out of this dilemma. I acquired a partner, a Polish woman who had become a tobacco smuggler between Hungary and Poland. Now I knew that if I were caught I would admit with tears in my eyes that I had been smuggling tobacco. And what would be my sentence for such an offense? At the most, two months in jail — sheer delight. Generally, it was safer to murder someone for a few dollars or to get caught in smuggling than to shake one's fist at a Russian soldier because he had stolen one's watch or bicycle in broad daylight.

The journey from Budapest to Katowice in normal times is an overnight trip. We made it in five days and changed trains only nine times. Sometimes we slept in little hotels crawling with

bugs, sometimes in the mud and snow on the station platform, and sometimes on the dirty floors of the waiting rooms.

My partner was about sixty years old and she was new in the business. She had five grandchildren, whose parents during the war had languished in German concentration camps. Now she had to make a living for them, the small and the orphaned.

Although this was long after the war, the trains were still crowded with former labor slaves who had worked for the Germans: Poles, Yugoslavs, French, Ukrainians, Jews, Hungarians, Czechs, a destitute group of people, some of them looking more dead than alive, talking all the European languages. But mostly they were from Russian-controlled territory. They were going back. For a long time they had listened to the American radio, asking them to return. Now they were on their way home, in the hope of finding a new democracy.

I finally arrived in Warsaw. I say *Warsaw*, but the city did not exist at that time. For miles, as far as the eye could see, there were nothing but ruins. The ruins of 1939 had grown into bumpy hills, while those of the last Polish insurrection, in 1944, were fresh heaps of rubble. There was no noise except the sound of the wind stirring up the clouds of

dust. On the debris you could see crosses marking the spots where people had perished under them.

Once, among these crosses, I saw some children playing Gestapo. The crosses served as gallows. Little boys were pretending to hang each other. Some of them were clinging to the bars of the crosses with their frozen fingers and lifting their feet wrapped in rags. They shouted, "Long Live Poland!" and stuck out their tongues to make the execution look more realistic.

The individual citizen's reaction to such monstrous defeat as the Polish nation had suffered during the war can vary. Some Poles thought that after the horrors of the German occupation and after the treason of the West, they should drop the traditional Polish policy of non-compromise, and instead rebuild the country, liquidate the Underground and try to reach an understanding with the Russians.

Now you must not forget that Poland was the only subjugated country without a Quisling in the last war. But subsequent experience showed the Europeans that a Quisling frequently pays off,

and so does an agreement with your enemies and disloyalty to your allies — something which, from the Polish point of view, had always been considered with utter contempt. The Poles had also learned where their former principles had led them.

Those Poles who just could not discard their Polish principles descended into the still existing Underground. They were now called Our Boys from the Woods, or just Bandits, depending on who was speaking of them.

The Poland I saw was torn inside, destroyed on the outside, and bled white. But it was a country very much in earnest, incredibly full of vitality, and tough. Here, the girls would not sell themselves. The people lived like cavemen among the ruins, without light or water, and they wore rags like beggars. But here, the boys did not think of escaping. The country seemed to me both wonderful and terrifying. I was a stranger in this world which was so alarmingly different, and I was erring about the place as in a city long foundered, moving as in a bad dream.

— ALEXANDRA ORME

*Other reports on life in Europe as seen by Miss Orme will be published here in the near future.*

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# ON VIEW...

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## DOWN TO EARTH by Alan Devoe

FOR SOMETHING like a dozen years, in the old *American Mercury*, there appeared every month a department called *Down to Earth*. The articles under that heading were concerned with subjects, and written from a viewpoint, of a particular and in some senses peculiar kind. Sometimes they were biographical studies of animals: a weasel, a skunk, a toad, a common dauber wasp. Sometimes they were broader treatments of how creatures behave: the occurrence of "war" in nature, the operation of instinct, the sensory-motor quality of animals' inner experience.

From time to time the articles were meditative and speculative: the sort of thinking and the sort of meditation, at any rate, that go on in a man who spends his life peering up at the sky and down at the earth, shinnying up trees to have a look at hawk-nests and poking into woodchuck burrows to see what the 'chucks are doing. These *Down to Earth* articles, as I say, went on for a dozen years, which is about four

lifetimes for a brown bat and just about an entire lifetime even for a fox. I wrote them.

The old *American Mercury*, now, is gone forever. With this issue there comes into being its successor, *The New Mercury*, a very different magazine. No one who has proceeded this far in it will need to be told how different it is. What does require telling here is something about *Down to Earth*, which now, in these new surroundings, continues.

During almost thirteen years of monthly animal-talk and earth-talk under the *Down to Earth* title, the first-person pronoun was used, at a guess, scarcely half a dozen times. A sentence might go, say, like this: "A deer, impaled on a fence-post, may be so little affected by pain that it continues browsing." The sentence would virtually never read, as it might have done, "Up on a clearing in the hemlock woods on my hill, a little after sunrise the other morning, I found a spike-horn buck that had tried to jump the fence I built there . . . ."

*Down to Earth* talked about the animal-scene, the earth-scene, the aboriginal nature-of-things which is permanently the primary estate of all of us; and in the long course of that continuous concern must doubtless have revealed, if only between the lines, something of the man behind the words; but no more than that minimum.

The editor of *The New Mercury* thinks that, even if only this once, in this first issue, there should be a direct communication. I am invited — invited?; *instructed* — to be personal.

Who writes *Down to Earth*? Where does it get itself written? Here, in a magazine importantly concerned with politics and economics, major news stories, compelling fiction, and the like, there are going to keep popping up every month these *Down to Earth* considerations of such unexpected matters as how owls fly silently, and why there are snails in limestone country, and how long a queen termite can go on laying eggs. After all, the editor persuasively insists, a *New Mercury* reader shouldn't just be confronted "cold" with these naturalizings. As the standard and unimprovable phrase has it, What's going on here?

Well, yes, that's reasonable. I will do what I can about it.

Who writes *Down to Earth*? Perhaps it may make things more

comfortable all around if I try a sort of standing off and squinnying at the man in the way in which I am accustomed to peering at herons and invading the privacy of chipmunks, and say what has to be said in as nearly as possible that equanimous spirit. Well, now. . . .

The man who writes *Down to Earth*, Alan Devoe, is by trade a writer-naturalist. What he does, that is, is to continually contemplate the primal earth-scene, The Creation — worms, titmice, beavers, dragon-flies, salamanders, the thronging moil of original animallom, including, of course, amid and as part of this creaturely company, the primate that is Us — and, out of this contemplation of these basic primalities, so to speak, write down what he has seen and how it seems to him. This is the man Devoe's whole life? It is.

When he was a very small boy, he was fascinated to daftness by animals, by the way it smells in the woods, by what sassafras tastes like, by the question of what is occurring (if anything is) inside the consciousness of a frog-hunting garter snake, and he has gone on addressing himself to such matters as these ever since. He has an earth-struck heart, this fellow, and is in spirit incurably part raccoon, part salamander, and part (doubtless) algae and

lichen, and that is the way things will be between himself and earth until he decomposes into the farther and final union. (It is only just to him to observe that he does not always, or even often, write with this sort of splathery passion. He is aware, none better, that the most honest and deeply felt nature-lyricism can come out a dreadful goo, and he tries to hold himself to easygoingness and accuracy. But it has seemed as well for us to see him, right away, at the worst that can be expected.)

## II

Now then. Is this an old man? I don't know why it is, but people always seem to imagine that anyone who goes woods-pondering and woodchuck-wondering must be a kind of Ancient-of-the-Forrest. John Burroughs, to be sure, *got* to be one; and so did Muir and Thompson Seton and a lot of others, but before they were old naturemen they were young naturemen. The earth-passion antedates the beards. Devoe is not an old man. If he is going to live anywhere near as long as his friend Seton, or even anywhere near as long as several of his animalizing cronies who are still heartily stumping through swamps and hanging by their heels to peer into kingfisher nests, he isn't yet, exactly speaking,

middle-aged. At this writing, he is watching the migrant geese of his forty-first autumn.

And where do all these things go on? On a hundred-and-some acres on an R.F.D. route in upstate New York, not far over the boundary line from Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The land takes in a lot of wooded hills, and some expanses of pasture, and about three-quarters of a mile or so of brook; and *Down to Earth* has emanated from this place ever since it began. Devoe thinks of the land (and indeed is given to speaking of it with tedious repetitiveness) as his "living laboratory."

Do white-footed mice sing? It says in one textbook that they do, and in another one that they don't. What Devoe likes better than anything else in the world is prowling into his far woods for a few midnights, and sitting on a stump as wonderingly and simply-mindedly as Adam, and seeing if he can't find out.

I am supposed to say, the editor of *The New Mercury* tells me, what else Alan Devoe has written besides *Down to Earth*. All right. He has written animal studies and suchlike for many magazines. He writes books. The ones still in print are *Phudd Hill*, *Lives Around Us*, and *Speaking of Animals*. Devoe is working on another one now, for publication in the fall, 1951.

There was a phrase, "and such-like," in that paragraph. That was shorthand for a good many things he writes of a religious and philosophical sort. *Religious*? Great guns, we aren't in for a *theologian*, are we? No. But a religious man, yes, there's no getting around that, I think. A man doesn't spend his life entranced by sky and sun and fox-paw prints and the elementary adventures of awareness unless he has a lasting sense of wonder, and there are just no naturalists who don't have a lot of awe in them — by God, they'd *better* — and there are hardly any naturalists who can escape having a huge feeling of thanks. Put all these together, and the thing that occurs, inescapably, is religiousness. Devoe thinks that there is a fearful lot of

mystical flapdoodle in the world, but he also thinks that religion, in its essentials, is as spontaneous a thing, in our primate selves, as hydrotropism in a turtle on a June morning; and he thinks it's as bad to ignore the one natural fact as the other. It is entirely impossible to restrain him from injecting something of this into his work now and then, and we may as well know of it now.

Well? Does there have to be any more of this exhibition? I shouldn't think so, no. We have got the general hang and feel, I think, of the man who will be writing in this space. I have put him on view for you as well as I am able. He writes next month, I believe, a sober enough piece about woodchucks. I turn him over to you.



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***Draughts***  
\*  
***of Old*** \*  
\*  
***Bourbon***  
\*



THERE WAS the night in Washington that I ran off with Evalyn MacLean's jewels, including the Hope Diamond and the Star of the East. This was in 1942. We were only three at dinner: Evalyn, her secretary, and me, and over the coffee I said: "Evalyn, how about taking those things off and letting me look at them?"

I was examining them under the light when suddenly there was an air raid alert. The house went crazy. Two maids jerked Evalyn behind a screen, ripped off her dress, and slapped on her new Hattie Carnegie nurse's uniform. One footman clamped a tin hat on my head while another thrust a fire axe in my hand. I gulped down a couple of extra bourbons just in case I got mangled by a bomb.

"Evalyn," I shouted above the din, "what the hell you want me to do with these damn diamonds?"

"Don't waste time," she yelled from behind the screen. "Put 'em in your pocket and let's go!"

We charged off through the darkness toward her first-aid post four blocks away. In the middle of the first block we halted in horror. A light was burning in a neighbor's house!

"That light must go out!" Evalyn decreed. She waited in the street while I went to persuade the folks to turn out their light. I rang the bell; no one answered.

"Knock the door down!" Evalyn shouted from the street.

I rang again. "Aw, Evalyn, I can't smash this glass door," I yelled. "This is only damn-fool practice."

"How do you know it is?" she shouted back. "Bombers may be here any minute. God, man, don't quibble: knock the door down!"

Well, I had had a few bourbons; I was standing there hefting that fire axe; every fireman



loves to break glass; and maybe the bombers *were* coming. I swung that axe, smashed the glass, stepped through and turned off the light, and saved Georgetown from no telling what all. Next day Evalyn sent the folks \$100 to pay for their door.

Back in the street Evalyn was pleased, and we rushed on toward the post, where dowagers in Hattie Carnegie uniforms were receiving terse reports from Boy Scouts and arranging bandages and splints, all ready for the mangled bodies. Evalyn had brought a check for one thousand dollars. She and another Carnegie Nightingale were buying a truck with which to haul victims to succor. Trucks were hard to come by then, but John L. Lewis was going to get it for them.

Feeling a bit shaken, as well as in the way, I retired to a quiet corner and sipped on the medicinal brandy. As time went on, you could feel the growing disappointment. Not one mangled body, and all this amateur talent going to waste. A pair of eyes fell on me, then another pair, and suddenly I was being pulled toward a table for all these voracious women to practice on. My coat was torn off and tossed into a corner, and for an hour I lay sprawled there while they took turns splinting my femurs and tibias.

When at last they tired of me, I recovered my coat and tin hat and fire axe, and Evalyn's chauffeur drove us back to Friendship. It was too late, so I left her at the door and the chauffeur drove me to the Roosevelt Hotel. I was tired and drunk, but not too drunk to hear something jingle in my coat pocket when I tossed the coat across a chair.

My Lord, it was those diamonds! I rushed to the door and bolted it. I reached into my pocket in fear, for the coat had been out of my possession for more than an hour, and I didn't even remember how many diamonds she had given me. I recognized the Hope and the Star of the East, but there had been two or three rings and a million or so dollars worth of other assorted bracelets. I was sure some of it had been lost, and I didn't know whether to call Evalyn, the cops, or Edgar Hoover.

I braced, put on the coat, went downstairs, crawled into a taxicab and went back to Evalyn's. The resentful butler who finally answered the door told me Mrs. MacLean had retired.

"Well, you go wake her up," I said, "and tell her to come down here."

When she came down I had the stuff piled on a table. "For God's sake, Evalyn," I said. "Come and see if this stuff is all here."

She laughed and hardly glanced at it. "Why, of course, it's all there," she said. "Why'd you bother to bring it back tonight? Why didn't you just keep it till tomorrow?"

I was muttering incoherently as I stumbled out.

\* \* \*

Bill Alexander, Oklahoma's preacher-politician, tells this one.

One Sunday when I was just starting out, I went to a small country church to preach, and only one farmer showed up. He and I sat there waiting, in mutual embarrassment, and finally I put it up to him.

"Tell me this, brother," I asked. "If you took a load of hay down in the pasture to feed your cows and only one cow came up — would you feed her?"

The farmer considered it, then answered: "Yeah, preacher, I believe I would."

Then I got up, sang a few songs, passed the collection plate, preached for forty minutes, pronounced the benediction, and walked out with the farmer. At the door the farmer shook hands with me and said:

"You know, preacher, I been thinking. If I took that load of hay down in the pasture and only one cow came up — yeah, I'd feed her all right. *But damn if I'd give her the whole load!*"

\* \* \*

On the same night that Dewey nominated Doctor Eisenhower for President, I was pawing through my files and came across the only communication the Doctor ever sent me. I got it at 5 a.m., June 6, 1944. Thirty of us were in an LCVP four thousand yards off the Easy Red sector of Omaha Beach. As we circled, waiting for the signal to go in, each man was passed a white leaflet. There was barely enough light to read:

**"SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND  
ARMEN OF THE ALLIED  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE!**

"You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

"Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

"But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The

United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

"I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

"Good Luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

"(Signed)

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER."

The instant reaction of every man in the boat was a four-letter obscenity. A few crumpled the leaflets and tossed them into the sea; others pocketed them with remarks as to how they would be used.

"So Ike, too, has started beseeching Gawd in this frazzling war," a man chuckled. "I thought that was MacArthur's line."

I mumbled and counted on my fingers. "Nelson used eight words at Trafalgar," I said.

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Harper & Brothers will shortly publish *Patterns of Sexual Behavior* by two Yale men — an anthropologist, C. S. Ford, and a psychologist, F. A. Beach. The book contains, among other worthwhile things, the sad story of Congo, a female gorilla residing lately in the Philadelphia zoo.

Congo fell in love with the eminent naturalist, Yerkes, while he was studying her. Whenever Yerkes approached with his notebook, Congo made enticing gestures. As Yerkes made notes and drifted to better observation posts, Congo offered the "usual or normal sex presentation of the female gorilla." Yerkes observed "a pronounced tremor or shivering of the entire body — the phenomenon which appears commonly in man, both male and female, in connection with pronounced sexual excitement."

Now Yerkes might have responded, for the Yale men insist that "within limits, man is biologically equipped to respond sexually to a great range of stimuli and potential partners, including other species." But Yerkes rejected Congo. Indeed,

he reports, Congo's offering herself proved "extremely embarrassing," and "it required considerable adroitness and strength of resistance on my part to withstand her attack." But determined as she was, Congo remained gentle and friendly through the whole courtship.

The book correlates all the evidence now available at Yale to show that man's sexual behavior is little different from that of the apes, or, indeed, from that of rats and kangaroos. But to us the image of Congo persists.

Here is this poor gorilla in love with a scientist. No one can explain to her what esthetic, moral and religious considerations are thwarting her desire. She only knows that she is unhappy and frustrated because the object of her libido is concerned solely with taking notes about her condition.

We seem to see modern, neurotic man, in a cage of codes and taboos, casting himself before the observing scientists in a posture of suppliant desire . . . and the scientists only move to better vantage points, observe, and record.

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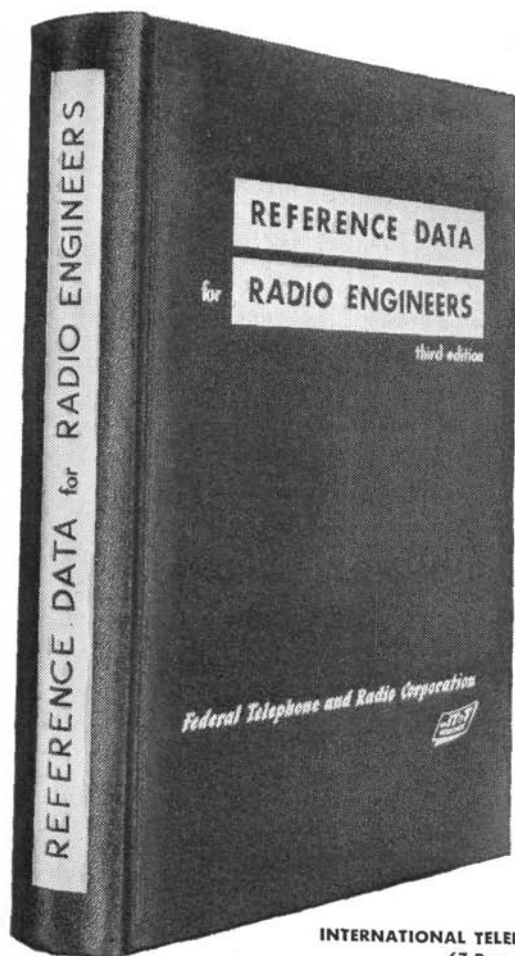
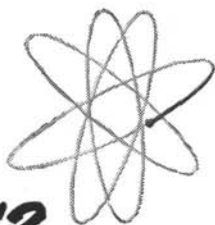
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